
IRELAND'S CAUSE
IN
ENGLAND'S PARLIAMENT

JUSTIN M^cCARTHY

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BY
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WITH PREFACE BY
JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY



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PREFACE.

TO win with a minority is surely the highest achievement of a parliamentary party. It means an appeal to the nobler elements of the opposition. It is more than victory: it is conversion.

For seven centuries, Ireland has fought England physically, — a fight of incredible courage, for the odds were hopeless: five to thirty in number, five to a thousand in wealth and organization. Weight conquered; and every century and every year added a new chain to the vanquished.

But as soon as Ireland lays down the pike and takes up the word, her advance begins. She could not reach her enemy's heart with a sword: she captures her soul with an argument.

The progress of the Irish Parliamentary party in the English House of Commons is a study for

all minorities. It is a story of profound interest to readers not akin to the Celt. It promises to be the first radical national reform by legislation, without revolution, of European history.

The story of this movement and party is told by the proper hand when Justin McCarthy is the historian. He is part of it, and a large part. He is the vice-president of the Irish Parliamentary party, and he has the trained quality of the objective seer: so that his word, always dispassionate and considerate, has double and lasting value.

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

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IRELAND'S CAUSE IN ENGLAND'S PARLIAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS IRELAND'S CAUSE?

THE title which I have chosen for this book has at least the advantage of expressing with precision and with sufficient fulness my own idea as to the nature of the task I am undertaking. My desire is to make clear to Americans what is the distinct national cause which the Irish parliamentary party represent in the English Parliament, and why Ireland should have a national cause to plead there. I desire to describe the methods her representatives have adopted in order to accomplish that success, which is now already, to all appearance, within measurable distance, to quote Mr. Gladstone's famous expression. I desire to describe the forces of opposition to the Irish cause, as well as the forces that are friendly to it.

I have been in the struggle, and I know the men. In that sense I have a story to tell. Eight years ago, I ventured to say to the House of Commons, that before very long the question of Home Rule would make and unmake ministries, and that, when it came to that, the cause of Home Rule would be virtually won. It has come to that now. The cause of Home Rule makes and unmakes ministries; it will make and unmake ministries until Home Rule is won.

In the mean time, it may interest Americans to hear the story of the Irish movement told by one who has marched in the ranks, who has shouldered a musket or trailed a pike in the cause of Home Rule. What is Home Rule? What is the demand that the Irish representatives, speaking in the name and with the authority of the people of Ireland, are presenting to the Imperial Parliament at Westminster? Do we ask for any thing new; any thing unprecedented; any thing exceptional; any thing unreasonable in principle, or likely to be dangerous in its operation to the welfare of the empire? No, we ask for nothing of the kind. Some English newspapers write, even still, as if the proposal for a Home Rule system for Ireland was an audacious innovation. But it is not an innovation; it would be sim-

ply a restoration. Some English public men talk even still, as if the union of the English and Irish Parliaments into one organization were at least as old as the flood. But the Act of Union is, in the historical sense, a thing of the day before yesterday. The Act of Union came into force on the first day in the first year of the present century. Up to that time, and almost since the beginning of England's connection with Ireland, Ireland had always her Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin, to administer the affairs and see to the national interests of the country. Undoubtedly the Irish Parliament was at various stages of its existence, very unlike in its conditions to what we now in America and in England would regard as a national assembly. It was not representative in the modern sense, or in the true sense ; and it was wretchedly dependent on the Crown, or on that council which was the mere instrument of the Crown. Still it was a Parliament, and asserted its authority when it could. So long ago as 1372, there was a conflict of authority between the English Parliament and the Irish. The English Parliament insisted that Ireland must raise a larger sum to meet the charges of Irish administration. The King summoned the Irish Parliament over to England to debate on the disputed question. The Irish

Parliament replied by a declaration, that they were in no wise bound to send a delegation to England ; but that nevertheless, as it was the King's wish, they would do so, specially reserving all their own rights, and of course, among the rest, the right to grant or refuse the additional subsidy asked of them.

Poynings' Act, as it is called, the Act which was projected and carried in 1494, by Sir Edward Poynings, deputy-governor of Ireland, reduced the Irish Parliament to a certain degree of dependency on the Crown, and the advisers of the Crown in England, and on the English Parliament. In other words, Sir Edward Poynings obtained the passing of legislation which decreed that an Irish Parliament should not be summoned until the principles of any measures intended to be submitted to such Irish Parliament had been submitted to the English Government and approved of by them. Poynings' Act also extended to Ireland any legislation passed for England by the English Parliament. Undoubtedly Poynings' Act, or Acts, reduced the power of the Irish Parliament so much as to make it little better than a mere recording agency of the will of the English sovereign. But it will have to be borne in mind, that at that time the English Parliament itself was hardly anything better than a mere recording agency of the

will of the English sovereign. The English Parliament sometimes chafed at the yoke, and so too did the Parliament of Ireland. In March, 1720, an Act was passed to settle a conflict of authority between the two Parliaments. A measure was introduced by the English Government, the preamble of which declared that "attempts have lately been made to shake off the subjection of Ireland unto and dependence upon the imperial crown of this realm, which will be of dangerous consequence to Great Britain and Ireland." The meaning of this portentous preamble was, that the Irish House of Lords persisted in assuming the right to act as the final court of appeal, "to examine, correct, and amend the judgments and decrees of the courts of justice in the kingdom of Ireland." The bill declared that the Irish House of Lords had no such right, and that the right now entirely belonged to the House of Lords in England. The Act was passed, of course, in the English Parliament. But a great English peer, the Duke of Leeds, recorded his protest against it, on the ground, among many others, that this "taking-away of the jurisdiction of the Lords' House in Ireland may be a means to disquiet the lords there, and disappoint the King's affairs." I dwell on these facts to show that for centuries there

was a distinct Irish Parliament, endowed with authority of some sort, to manage the affairs of Ireland. Of course it is a fact, that during the greater part of its history it was simply a Parliament of English Protestants settled in Ireland, and having no manner of sympathy with the vast majority of the Irish people. But it is also a fact, that the sympathies of the Irish people, whenever they had an opportunity of showing them, were with the Irish Parliament, and were for upholding its authority against the English Parliament, simply because it was the Irish Parliament; because, at least, it was called the Irish Parliament; because it recognized in name, if only in name, the existence of an Ireland which was entitled to a national Parliament.

Of course it did not represent the Irish people. But neither did the English Parliament at that time, or for long after, represent the English people. The English Parliament was, until a time very near to our own, absolutely dependent on the personal will and even the personal caprice of the sovereign. Queen Victoria is positively the first really constitutional sovereign who ever sat on the throne of Great Britain. As the English Parliament kept advancing step by step in independence, the Irish Parliament kept advancing too; and I shall show presently, that,

on at least one great question of civil liberty, the Irish Parliament, with all its faults, was about a quarter of a century ahead of the Parliament at Westminster. At all events, I have said quite enough to impress on the mind of American readers the fact, that, during many centuries, Ireland had a distinct and separate Parliament of her own. It may be asked, Why tell us all this? Is it not written down in history? Yes, it is written down in history; but we do not all of us read and remember every thing that is written down in history, especially in the history of Ireland. Lest my American readers should think I am unreasonably disparaging their degree of familiarity with all the facts of Irish history, let me tell them of something that happened during a recent debate on the Irish question in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone was making a speech; and in its course he referred to something done by the Irish Parliament before 1782, — the year when Poynings' Act was repealed, and the independence of the Irish Parliament was restored. A law official of the present government, a man of eloquence and capacity, interrupted Gladstone with the words, "There was no Irish Parliament before 1782." Mr. Gladstone paused like one thunder-stricken. "Does the honorable and learned gentleman," he

asked in amazement, "really mean to deny that there was an Irish Parliament before 1782?" — "Certainly I do," was the confident and complacent answer. I believe the honorable and learned gentleman was speaking in full sincerity. I believe he honestly did not know that there ever was an Irish Parliament before the days of Grattan and the volunteers. Why should he know? How should he know? Of course he was not likely to read Irish history or Irish newspapers. His predecessor in the same office, actually, under a liberal government, once declared in the House of Commons, with look of lordly contempt, that he never read Irish newspapers. Why, then, should the solicitor-general under a Tory government be expected to know that there was an Irish Parliament before 1782? Were not the only London newspapers which he was likely to read, telling him and the world every day that the cry for an Irish Parliament was a cry for an audacious innovation to which Englishmen of to-day could never listen, and of which Englishmen in the happier yesterday had never heard? I was talking lately to an English lady, wife of an eminent London physician, and she surprised me by telling me that she had become a complete convert to the cause of Home Rule. I was delighted to hear it. "Do you

know," she asked, "why I have become converted?" I did not know. "Because," she told me, "I have read, for the first time in my life, the history of Ireland." — "I wish," I said, "you would get your husband to read it too." She laughed, and said, "Oh, I have tried to get him, but he won't : he says it might convert him, and in his position it would not suit him to be a Home Ruler." For it is as well to tell the American public at once, that a man who makes his living in any way out of the aristocratic classes in England, would find it much to his disadvantage to be a Home Ruler or a sympathizer with the Irish national cause. As long as he can say he knows nothing about it, he is safe. Thus he can reconcile his conscience and his position. The man who does not want to be a Home Ruler must not read Irish history. That may be taken as an axiom.

This demand for Home Rule, then, is not a novelty. An Irish Parliament, whatever it might be, would not be an innovation. I suppose I may take it that these two facts at least are beyond dispute. I come, then, to another consideration. Is there any thing unreasonable in asking for a Home Rule system for Ireland? The empire of Queen Victoria is for the most part an agglomeration of home-ruled communi-

ties. The Canadian Dominion and Provinces, the Australian and Australasian colonies, are governed by themselves. The South-African colonies have their representative systems and their Home Rule. These colonies, it may be said, are too far away from England to be of any danger to her, should a turbulent spirit ever arise. I should say that, in the instance of Canada at least, the distance from England greatly increases the danger, as was felt pretty keenly in English political circles during the progress of the dispute about the "Alabama" claims. However, let that pass, and let us take the instance of communities that are not far away from England. Take the Channel Islands, within gunshot almost of the English shore. The Channel Islands are peopled by a French population; French is the official language of the legislatures, of the courts of law, of the royal court. Yet these French populations are allowed to manage their own affairs. We never hear any thing about them in Westminster; we never hear any thing about them, for the good reason that they are allowed to manage their own affairs. Take the little Isle of Man, the holiday place of Manchester and Liverpool excursionists. The Isle of Man has not only a Home Rule system, but it is a system absolutely different in every way from any thing

known in England or the great English colonies. The little island is allowed to manage its affairs after its own fashion, in accordance with its own traditions. We never hear any thing about the Isle of Man in the Imperial Parliament. If, then, there are so many Home Rule communities already under the English Crown, what reason is there on the face of things why one other Home Rule community should not be added to the number? In every one of these Home Rule communities, Home Rule has either kept up, or created for the first time, prosperity, peace, and content. There is not one single example of Home Rule of a genuine kind working the other way. But the claim of Ireland is much stronger than the claim of Canada, for instance. When Home Rule was demanded for Canada, it was undoubtedly an innovation and an experiment. It might have been asked — it was very often asked — of Canada and Canada's advocates, "Why do you cry out for this new thing? Why do you call upon us to make this rash experiment?" But this question cannot be asked of the representatives of Ireland. They ask for no new thing: they ask that the old condition of things shall be restored; they ask that Ireland shall have its own again. The system has worked

for good, and nothing but good, wherever it has been tried. But in other places it was undoubtedly an innovation; in Ireland's case it will be merely a restoration.

I need hardly go about to prove elaborately that the Home Rule system has worked well in the great English colonies; but I may say something about Canada. What was the condition of Canada? The same antagonisms of race and of creed were found in Canada that people lament and bewail in Ireland. Canada, like Ireland, was governed virtually from Westminster. The governor-general's offices were for Canada what Dublin Castle is for Ireland. What was the consequence? The French Canadian detested the English and the Scotch Canadian; the Catholic hated the Protestant, and the Protestant hated the Catholic. All were agreed on one point, and one point only,—detestation of the centralized system of government. Lower Canada went into rebellion; Upper Canada went into rebellion. The English Government struck a rare stroke of good luck. They sent out as commissioner, to restore Canada to order, a statesman and a man of genius, Lord Durham. Lord Durham's name has been curiously forgotten in our time. His work survives him, however, and the

prosperity of the Dominion of Canada is his monument. I can hardly forgive the people of Quebec for having changed the name of "Durham Terrace" to "Dufferin Terrace." Lord Dufferin is a man of great ability, varied accomplishments, and charming manners, and he did a great deal for Quebec. I dare say he would be a much more agreeable man to dine with than the hot-tempered and overbearing Lord Durham. But Lord Durham was a man of genius, and the Dominion of Canada is the trophy of his genius. Lord Durham saw that there was but one remedy for the ills of Canada, and that remedy was Home Rule. He saw that the only possible way of governing a country in which there are different races, different religions, different habits, and different traditions, is on the principle of what we may call, for lack of any better expression, the federal system of government. He laid the foundation of that system in the Canada of his time, and his scheme provided for the expansion of the system into the Canada of our time. He found Canada distracted by intestine dissensions and hatreds, unprosperous, retrograding, in bitter enmity with the parent country, a source of weakness, and even of shame, to England. What is Canada now? A peaceful and

prosperous country, growing and expanding in resources and in strength every day, a country which never gives England a moment's trouble. If England could only, at any time within the last ten or a dozen years, have sent us in Ireland a Lord Durham! If only she had the Lord Durham to send! Lord Caernarvon might have been a Lord Durham — only he was not. "What's impossible can't be, and very seldom comes to pass." I fully believe that Lord Caernarvon had all the good-will, all the warm wish, to be the Lord Durham of Ireland. But even if he wanted nothing else, he wanted the imperial, the imperious mind of Lord Durham.

It is a curious study now to read the debates in Parliament on the proposals of Lord Durham. The objections made by opponents of the schemes might be quoted word for word as speeches made by Conservatives or secessionist-Liberals against Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule scheme. If we adopt Lord Durham's plan, we shall leave the loyal minority at the mercy of the disloyal majority; we shall leave our Protestant co-religionists at the mercy of Catholic bigotry. It will mean, it is meant to mean, the separation of Canada from England. The really respectable and intelligent

people of Canada are all against it; only the sedition-mongers are in favor of it. It is not really a Canadian movement at all; it is a movement fostered and kept up altogether by supplies of money from the United States. The enemies of England are doing it all, and Lord Durham is only the tool of the enemies of England. Lord Durham's official title was Lord High Commissioner. The "Times" of that day—very like in fairness and intelligence to the "Times" of this day—used to make it a practice to call him "the Lord High Seditious." Glancing at some of those old leading articles, I thought lately how wonderfully like they are to the attacks which the "Times" makes every day on Mr. Gladstone. I almost felt like Vivian Grey, when, as he is talking with the mediatized Prince of Turriparva over the prince's schemes and plans and ambitions, his mind goes back to the far-distant days when he talked over the same kind of thing, under different conditions, with the English Marquis of Carabas, and found it all silly and weary, and provocative of sleep; and he thinks within himself, that, after all, time is nothing, and that, from the Marquis of Carabas to the Prince of Turriparva, there is not the transit of a moment. From the "Times" denouncing

Lord Durham, to the "Times" denouncing Mr. Gladstone, there is no distance to be traversed; it is the same thing. A Rip Van Winkle who had fallen asleep while the "Times" was droning over the pacificator of Canada, might well believe it was just the same old drone still going on, if he happened to wake up at a right moment, and hear the "Times" droning over Mr. Gladstone. Little Lord Durham reckes now what the "Times" said then; little need has Mr. Gladstone to reck, even now, what the "Times" says of him.

CHAPTER II.

HOW IRELAND LOST HER PARLIAMENT.

HOW, then, did Ireland come to lose her national Parliament? What was the crime, or series of crimes, which that Parliament committed, and which rendered necessary its sudden extinction? The story is an old one now. It has often been told, yet it will bear telling once again. Perhaps it cannot be told too often for the purpose of impressing on the minds of stranger readers the full force and meaning of the claim which Ireland has upon England for the restoration of her national Parliament. The British Philistine idea is just this: "Ireland had a Parliament for a few, a very few, years; and the Irish Parliament managed things so badly,—getting up frightful rebellions among its other fantasies of wickedness,—that, for the sake of Ireland itself, the wicked Irish Parliament had to be abolished, and Ireland brought under the saving shelter of the imperial Parlia-

ment at Westminster." Let me, in a few words, now tell the story as authentic history tells it. We shall see then whether it was through any fault of her own, that Ireland lost her national Parliament. We shall see whether the cause of her losing it does not strengthen immensely her claim for its restoration. We shall see whether the Irish Parliament, with all its faults, was not fighting the battle of religious liberty, the battle of civilization, against the English sovereign and his minister. The Irish Parliament was extinguished because its leaders were men more enlightened than George the Third; because they, Protestant as well as he, stood up for that cause of Catholic emancipation which he was determined to crush.

The Irish Parliament, as I have said, was not an independent Parliament in our modern sense of the word. It was not, even after the repeal of Poynings' Act, independent in that modern sense. Neither was it representative, according to our ideas of representation. It made laws for a country, five-sixths of whose population then, as now, belonged to the Roman-Catholic Church. But a Catholic could not be a member of the Irish Parliament. More than that, a Catholic could not give a vote for the election of a member of the Irish Parliament. The Irish

Parliament, therefore, could no more be said to represent the Irish people than a South-Carolina Legislature in the days before the civil war could be said to represent the slave population of the State. Yet so national in spirit were the leaders and the best men of that Irish Parliament, that, although responsible to no single Catholic voter, — for there was no Catholic voter, — the first use these Protestant gentlemen made of the increased independence of the Parliament was to endeavor to carry legislative measures for the emancipation of their Catholic fellow-subjects. The leaders of the movement had a hard struggle for a while. The Irish Parliament was made up for the most part of landlords and lawyers, and the majority represented the ascendancy of race and of creed. Still Grattan and his friends were able to accomplish a reform, which at least enabled Catholics to vote for the election of members of the House of Commons. This was not enough for Grattan. He and his friends were determined that the chains of the Catholic should not “clank o’er his rags.”

In the mean time an association had been formed in Ireland which afterwards became famous in Ireland’s history, and the original objects of which have been more constantly and systematically misrepre-

sented than those of any other political organization of which I have read. I am speaking of the Society of United Irishmen. The Society of United Irishmen was founded in 1791 by Theobald Wolfe Tone. Wolfe Tone was a Protestant patriot, a man of genius and indomitable spirit and rich mental resource. He founded the Society of United Irishmen for the purpose of obtaining Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform in Ireland. Tone's great grievance was that there was no national government in Ireland; that the country was ruled "by Englishmen and the servants of Englishmen," whose sole object was to advance the interests of England at the expense of those of Ireland. The Irish Parliament was mainly elected by a number of pocket boroughs, and rotten boroughs, and constituencies dependent on some great peer or other territorial magnate. Tone's policy was to unite all true Irishmen against this system; and it was by his urgent advice that the new association took no account in its title of any thing sectarian, and merely styled itself a Society of United Irishmen. Tone became secretary of a Catholic association, for the purpose of obtaining relief from penal disqualification for the Catholics. He had worked so gallantly and zealously in the Catholic cause, that the Catholics

were only too glad to make him, a Protestant, secretary of their distinctive association.

The Society of United Irishmen was composed mainly of young Protestants,—men, for the most part, of talents, education, and social position. Men like Thomas Addis Emmet and Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Hamilton Rowan belonged to it. Many wealthy merchants and bankers belonged to it. We know all about it now. We can study its proceedings and its records, its resolutions, its appeals to the Sovereign, its petitions to Parliament. We know that its objects were peaceful, loyal, patriotic, constitutional. We know that its aim was, as set out in its own pledge, to “endeavor to promote a brotherhood of affection and union among Irishmen of every religious persuasion,” with the object of procuring “a full, equal, and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland in Parliament.” For this full and equal and adequate representation, the first thing needful was the abolition of religious disqualification; the next thing, a comprehensive measure of parliamentary reform. Such was the object of the Society of United Irishmen at the beginning, and for many years of its subsequent existence. It was a constitutional association altogether, — peaceful in its professions, peaceful in its

aims. I hasten to anticipate a possible criticism by at once admitting that there were writers even then who denounced the United Irishmen as men of treasonable purpose. For these critics argued, as George the Third argued: "You must be disloyal to the Constitution and to the Sovereign, if you seek to have the Catholics emancipated. You must contemplate civil war; because you must know that England will never consent to grant Catholic emancipation unless you can conquer her in a civil war. Therefore, no matter what your protestations of loyalty, you must be disloyal. If you were to swear yourself black in the face, that you are only for measures of peace, you must, all the same, be conspiring for war." We hear this sort of argument in England just now, a good deal; and we can appreciate it. Those who employed it at that time employed it not only against Wolfe Tone, but against Grattan as well. "Henry Grattan must know," they said, "that he is allying himself with men whose policy will conduct them to civil war, to rebellion; therefore he is a rebel." Grattan never, as a matter of fact, was a member of the Society of United Irishmen; but that did not count for much with his opponents. Gladstone was never a member of the National League.

The unquestionable fact, however, — unquestionable by any one who knows any thing of the history of the times, — is, that the Society of United Irishmen was in the beginning, and through all its existence down to a certain event of which I shall presently tell, a peaceful, constitutional association, laboring for noble objects by pacific means. In truth, the United Irishmen were fully convinced that they were walking the straight way to a complete and a peaceful success. All the patriotism of Ireland was with them; the best and loftiest intellect of England was with them. Their cause was making illustrious converts every day. Grattan himself, — what was he but a convert to the principle of Catholic emancipation? He entered public life as its opponent, he soon became its warmest and most powerful friend. In January, 1795, the hopes of the United Irishmen seemed confirmed to the full; their success seemed to be proclaimed by the appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam as viceroy of Ireland.

I am anxious that my American readers should fix their eyes closely on this event in Irish history. The viceroyalty of Lord Fitzwilliam is a turning-point. Fitzwilliam was a man of generous, beneficent, and noble life. He had been a friend and

follower of Fox ; but he had quitted Fox, as Burke did, in the controversy about the French Revolution. He retained, however, his devotion to those principles of civil and religious liberty which Fox had always proclaimed. He came over to Ireland, as he understood, with full powers to satisfy the demands of the country, both as to Catholic emancipation, and the purifying of the administrative and the representative system. He threw himself heart and soul into Grattan's plans. He assisted Grattan with his own hand to draw up some of the measures of religious and political reform ; and he gave it to be publicly understood that he intended nothing short of a complete emancipation of the Catholics of Ireland. What was the consequence ? King George took fright. King George's conscience was awakened. King George's Protestant zeal began once again to eat him up. Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled. He was summoned back to England under conditions of humiliation and disgrace. He was hurried back like some criminal about to be brought before some bar of public justice. For what ? Because he had promised to assist the Irish National Parliament in obtaining political emancipation for five-sixths of the population of Ireland.

The effect upon the Irish people was like the effect upon the Northern States of the Union when the flag at Fort Sumter was fired on. The Irish people saw that under such a king there was no hope of any peaceful settlement of the national demand. On the very threshold of the temple of hope they had been flung back into the cavern of despair. What was the effect more especially on the leaders of the Society of United Irishmen? These leaders were men of high spirit, brave men. Most of them were at that generous time of life when the loss of mere existence seems nothing, if compared with the surrender of a great principle and the tame sacrifice of a great cause. Despairing of a peaceful settlement of the national demands, they did what all true hearts must feel that they had a right to do: they flung themselves and the country into rebellion against the government of King George. I need hardly remind my American readers, that this was that same King George whose perversity and obstinacy compelled their forefathers to fly to arms against him.

Let us mark once more the difference between success and failure. The American rebels succeeded, and ceased to be rebels. Even contemporary history and public opinion justified their uprising, and glori-

fied their leaders. Our forefathers failed ; and down to this very day, there has hardly been an English historian of mark who has done any thing like justice to the motives of the uprising or of the men who took part in it, or to the many chances it had of success. Had this, that, and the other thing happened, or happened otherwise, had the winds not blown this way, had that man not died at the wrong time, — the Irish insurrection might have been a success. As it is, English historians, when they have condescended to notice the leaders of the Irish insurrection at all, have treated them usually as fools or as miscreants. I know of hardly any thing in historical literature so utterly perverse as Mr. Froude's picture of Wolfe Tone. The whole description is simply ignoble, a scandal and a shame to its author. Yet Mr. Froude himself told me once, in private conversation, that he rather admired Wolfe Tone.

A deluge of blood swept over the country, and then the rebellion was put down. Sir Ralph Abercromby, the humane, high-minded soldier, who once said that his victories made him melancholy, was for a time commander-in-chief of the English forces in Ireland, and has left it on record, that crimes of bloodshed and savagery were committed by the soldiers

under his command, which he was utterly powerless to prevent. "Every crime, every cruelty, that could be committed by Cossacks or Calmucs, has been committed here." Abercromby soon left the work of repression to other and less humane hands. The rebellion was over; and not one of the gallant young Protestant gentlemen who had taken part in it ever again appeared at an Irish meeting or in an Irish council-room to give his countrymen the benefit of his advice. The battle-field had dealt with some; the scaffold had disposed of others; mysterious midnight deaths in prison-cells, seeming very like convenient assassinations to avoid the trouble of public trial, had disposed of others yet; and those who survived had fled across the seas to find a home in foreign lands. There is to this day a monument conspicuous on Broadway, in the city of New York, which testifies to the manner in which the citizens of that great community appreciated the public services of Thomas Addis Emmet, one of the refugees of Ninety-eight. Who fears to speak of Ninety-eight? Not surely any of the descendants of the men who flung their souls into that gallant cause, and gave to it their generous blood. Not surely any of the descendants of those Englishmen whose wise and noble policy would have prevented Ninety-

eight, by conceding to justice and right those national claims which King George and his ministers rejected with scorn.

Ireland was now, once again, as a corpse on the dissecting-table, — to use an expression that more lately became famous. The king and his minister could do with her, as they well knew, pretty well what they pleased. The idea had for some time been afloat in ministerial circles in England, and Ireland too, that the only way of making Ireland manageable would be by the destruction of her separate Parliament, and by absorbing her representation into the English assemblies at Westminster. King George would seem to have made up his mind to this, from the moment when it became evident that the Irish Parliament would end by accepting the principle of Catholic emancipation. The outbreak of the rebellion gave, unfortunately, an opportunity to the King and his minister to carry out the scheme of absorption, — “the union of the shark and his prey,” as Byron called it. Pitt determined at once to bring up the scheme on which the King had set his heart. It was resolved that the Irish Parliament must be extinguished. A new viceroy was sent over especially for this purpose. Lord Camden had succeeded Lord Fitzwilliam.

Lord Camden was now succeeded by a soldier ; but a soldier whose name is not associated, at least on the American side of the Atlantic, with any very splendid military achievement. The new viceroy of Ireland was that Lord Cornwallis whose name will be remembered in American history, chiefly in connection with a certain famous capitulation at Yorktown. It was doubtless the idea of the good King George, that, although Lord Cornwallis might not have proved quite the sort of man to deal with George Washington and his followers, he was good enough to manage the population of Ireland, exhausted as Ireland was after her fierce and unsuccessful struggle. Lord Cornwallis was sent over with a commission to extinguish the National Parliament of Ireland, by whatever process, and at whatever cost.

By whatever process? Well, to be sure, the words must not be taken too literally. Even in those days, even George the Third could not simply abolish the Irish Parliament, and bid his will avouch it. The King had to put on some show of respect for constitutional and legal right. The thing to be done was to get the Irish Parliament to abolish itself ; the problem for Lord Cornwallis was, in fact, how to persuade or prevail upon the Irish House of

Commons, to vote away the legislative independence of the country. There was an Irish House of Lords, of course, but the Irish House of Lords was—very much like other Houses of Lords. No one expected, from the majority in the Irish House of Lords, any very heroic resistance to the will of the King, or patriotic deference to the will of the people. Therefore, the problem was, how to get at the House of Commons; how to get over the House of Commons; how, as we should say in modern English slang, to “nobble” the House of Commons. Lord Cornwallis went to work to nobble the House of Commons. He had three agencies at his command,—terrorism, fraud, and bribery. He made ample use of all his powers. He threatened, he deceived, he bribed and corrupted. Ample funds were placed at his disposal. He spent millions of pounds sterling in buying up some of the pocket boroughs from the peers and other territorial magnates who owned them, and who counted on their right to sell them just as they did on their right to sell their cattle and their sheep. The viceroy filled all the vacated places with creatures of his own. It was a familiar practice with him, when he got hold of a constituency in this way, to send for election the commandant of the nearest English

garrison, — some garrison just employed in putting down the rebellion, — and have this English soldier returned for the Irish House of Commons, and commissioned to vote away Ireland's national life.

The practical working of the schemes to get the Act of Union passed was in the hands of Lord Castlereagh, the Irish secretary, the man whom Byron spoke of as “a wretch never named but with curses and jeers.” Cornwallis, Castlereagh, and Clare, — Lord Clare, the Irish lord chancellor, — were the triumvirate intrusted with the odious task. Let us do Lord Cornwallis the justice to admit that the task to him was odious. He was a soldier of the old-fashioned order, who would carry out every instruction given by his master, no matter how base and detestable it might be. But he had enough of the spirit of a soldier, and enough of the heart of a man, to loathe the task to which he was now set. His own letters contain reiterated descriptions of the work he had to do, and of the disgust with which it inspired him. He tells again and again of the manner in which the wretched castle gang and their associates were continually crying out for more and more severity in Ireland; more imprisonments, more torture, more blood. He gives examples of the sort of conversation which used to go on at his

own dinner-table, among the creatures whom he was compelled to court and to entertain. He declares that he could go back to England with a conscience comparatively light, if he were only allowed "to kick those whom my public duties oblige me to court."

So far as one may judge, Lord Castlereagh and Lord Clare had no such qualms of conscience. They appear to have found the work congenial, and gone into it heart and soul. Lord Castlereagh made a public announcement that every nobleman who returned members to Parliament should be paid in cash fifteen thousand pounds for every member so returned, provided of course that the member voted the right way ; next, that every member who had bought his own seat should be paid back the money he had given for it ; and, thirdly, that all members of Parliament, and others who were losers by the union, should be compensated for their loss, and that a sum of one million and a half sterling should be voted for this latter purpose. An absurd attempt, founded, I suppose, on some imperfect knowledge of this latter transaction, has lately been made in England, to persuade the public that Castlereagh's alleged bribery was not bribery at all, but only compensation for injured interests. The contention would be absurd in any case, for much of the money

given away as compensation was really only the reward of corruption; but, besides that, the so-called compensation money represents only a small part of the money spent in carrying the Act of Union, and by far the larger part of this money was spent merely in the buying-up of votes. About five millions sterling were spent in all. Much of the bribery, too, consisted in the giving-away of offices, and the creating of new offices to give away. Bishops, judgeships, one chief-justiceship, rank in the navy, rank in the army,—all these were bribes freely given. Forty new peerages were created. If a man was too public-spirited to sell his country for a mere payment in money, and preferred a peerage, or insisted on a peerage as well, the obliging minister granted his demand; and to this day the phrase, “a union peer,” is used in Ireland as a stigma, as describing a man whose ancestor sold the legislative independence of his country for a coronet and a seat in the English House of Lords.

Of course there were men at that time, as there are at every great crisis in the history of every state,—men who were, as the old Scottish saying puts it, “ower good for banning, and ower bad for blessing;” men who had not the moral courage to stand up in the face of day for their country’s right,

nor the immoral courage to stand up in the face of day against it. Such men commonly sought refuge in retirement and obscurity; and every vacancy made in that way was, of course, a new opportunity to Castlereagh to buy some creature of his own into the House of Commons. Another sort of policy also was pursued. Any man who held any manner of public office or benefice under the Crown, and who refused to pledge himself to Castlereagh's policy, was remorselessly stripped of any rank or emolument he might have possessed. Under such conditions the wonder is that the minister did not succeed in getting much larger majorities for his proposals in the Irish House of Commons. The plain fact was, that any one who chose to sell his vote could get any price he liked for it. Any one who would not sell his vote had to brave the wrath of an unscrupulous minister, and, if he could be hurt by the Government, he most assuredly would be hurt. The wonder is that so many men held out; that such a large proportion of the Irish House of Commons fought against the union to the last. Grattan, who had gone out of parliamentary life, made hopeless by the outbreak of armed rebellion, came back to the House of Commons to lead the fight against the Act of Union. One of his stanchest comrades in the

noble work of resistance is a man whose family name comes out again at a somewhat later period in Irish history, — Sir John Parnell. The Parnell of that day fought as bravely for the maintenance of Ireland's legislative independence, as his descendant, the Parnell of our day, is fighting for its restoration. All that was best in English public life and English intelligence was opposed to the policy of Pitt.

Of course Pitt's policy prevailed. The Act of Union was passed, and the national Parliament of Ireland was extinguished—for a time. The first article of the Act of Union declares that "the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall upon the first day of January, 1801, and forever after, be united into one kingdom." Forever after! We are already beginning to see signs enough of the worthlessness of a statutory "forever" in the suppression of a nation's right. No doubt, the hope and firm belief of Pitt and Castlereagh was, that with the extinction of the Irish national Parliament, would be extinguished also the Irish national sentiment. Plunket, then still a patriot, warned the ministry that as well might the miserable maniac imagine that by the suicidal act which destroyed his perishable body, he could extinguish also his immortal soul. Time has even already shown that Plunket was right. The

national sentiment is not extinguished. It burns now, at this very hour, more brightly and strongly than it did even in the days when Plunket gave out, all in vain, his eloquent and impassioned warning to a stupid king and an unscrupulous minister. There is one way, and only one, by which the opponents of Ireland's demand can get rid of Irish national sentiment; and that one way is the extinction of the Irish race. Until the last man, woman, and child of Irish birth, or Irish descent, be got rid of from off the earth, — until that great and final act of eviction can be accomplished, the sentiment of Irish nationality will be a trouble to Tory statesmanship. There does not at present seem any immediate prospect of this complete extinction of the Irish race. The Irish race is growing everywhere but in Ireland. The time is not far distant when it will be allowed a chance of growing in Ireland too.

Something was needed to give the last touch of fraud and cruelty to the policy which was consummated in the union. The something needed was given, and it was this: Numbers of the weaker-kneed among the Catholics had been cajoled into supporting, or at all events not opposing, the union, by the assurances of Castlereagh and his colleagues, that, the moment the Act was passed, the imperial

Parliament would emancipate the Catholics in England and in Ireland. Lord Cornwallis, who no doubt believed what he said, had gone so far as to declare that Catholic emancipation would be made a cabinet measure in the first days of the imperial Parliament. The imperial Parliament, the Union Parliament, had hardly come into existence, when Pitt and his colleagues resigned office. This step, it was loudly told to the public, had been taken because the King would not consent to Catholic emancipation. It was taken, in reality, because a peace had to be made with France, as the English people were growing sick of the long war, — the war which, as it afterwards turned out, was then only beginning; and Pitt, who did not believe in the possibility of any abiding peace, and did not want peace, would not have any thing to do with the arrangements. He went out of office; a sham peace was made, which was very soon after unmade; and Pitt came back, master of the situation. He made no stipulation or even suggestion about the emancipation of the Catholics; nor did he ever again distress the conscience and disturb the nerves of his august sovereign by saying one single word to him on the subject of the Catholic claims.

CHAPTER III.

IRELAND WILL NOT HAVE THE UNION.

THERE are three points which it is specially important to impress upon the understanding of American readers. The first is, that until quite lately Ireland always had a Parliament of her own; the second, that the Irish people never were consulted about the abolition of the Irish Parliament; and the third, that, since its abolition, the Irish people have never ceased to demand its restoration. The legislative union of England and Ireland bears date the 1st of January, 1801; the rebellion of Robert Emmet broke out in 1803; the first emphatic protest against the destruction of Ireland's legislative independence, O'Connell's great movement for repeal of the union, began in 1843; the Young Ireland insurrection took place in 1848; the operations of the Phoenix Society began in 1858; the Fenian movement followed in 1866 and 1867, and the Fenian movement is a movement

still. All these organizations, however they may have differed in methods and in ultimate purposes, had the one thing in common, that they were protests against the destruction of Ireland's legislative independence. Through all the years, from the passing of the Act of Union to the present hour, the voice of Ireland—that is, of the vast majority of the Irish people—has never ceased to give out that protest. Every public man in Ireland has been popular exactly in proportion to the earnestness and the strength with which he led or joined in that national protest. There was always, at the very worst of times, a body of Irishmen in the House of Commons, who professed to represent that national protest. Some of the men were, indeed, self-seekers and shams; but the fact that a self-seeker thinks it to his advantage to sham a national sentiment, is only another testimony to the strength and the reality of the national sentiment. If the self-seekers could have got into Parliament without shamming national sentiment, they would have been very glad to do so. The Irish people were often mistaken in their men. They were never mistaken in their principles. One recalls with a melancholy curiosity the course of action and re-action in Ireland's political move-

ments for some generations. Constitutional agitation goes on until it reaches a certain point, and then it gives evident signs of faintness and of failure, and it is abandoned, and an attempt is made at some sort of armed organization. That, too, fails; and then, after an interval of depression, a new constitutional agitation is tried. But the purpose of the nation is never abandoned. That one hope springs eternal in the breast of Ireland. I can remember one long interval during which constitutional agitation — especially agitation in the House of Commons — was looked on with almost utter hopelessness and distrust by the great majority of the Irish people. The policy of every English government was to endeavor, in all possible ways, to win over to what I may call the imperial, or British, side, any man of ability whom the Irish people sent to Parliament to bear witness in Ireland's name. Once such a man could be induced to take office, to become a member of an English administration, to become the servant of an English prime minister, he was gone from the national ranks, and from the cause of his country. This was the fate of Sheil, O'Connell's foremost colleague and only possible rival in the days of the struggle for Catholic

emancipation. O'Connell himself lost much of his popularity because at a later day he tried to support Sheil, when Sheil, having accepted office, sought to be re-elected to the House of Commons. Not even O'Connell's influence could obtain the pardon of the Irish people for the man who had thus gone over to the enemy. The Irish people, by an instinct both natural and just, always assumed that the Irish nationalist who took office in an English administration had gone over to the enemy. Unfortunately there were always deserters of the kind. How could it be otherwise? England had every thing to offer which could tempt ambition: Ireland could offer nothing but her confidence and her love. Once there sprang up in the House of Commons a little band or gang of Irish adventurers, who, after having made impassioned professions of nationalism, in order to get into Parliament, began when they had got in there to propagate the doctrine that the best way in which an Irish member could serve his country was by taking office in an English government. To be sure, they admitted, if one man alone were to take office, not much good would come of that. He would be simply absorbed into the administration; rolled round in its diurnal course, like rocks and hills and trees. But how if several Irishmen were to get

office at once? Could they not then, standing loyally together, bring such an influence to bear on their English colleagues as must obtain redress for the wrongs of their country? From the first, these men and their policy and their professions were distrusted by true Irish nationalists in and out of the House of Commons. But they had their day, and they were clever and audacious; and they did succeed in palming themselves off upon an English liberal minister as representatives of the national sentiment of Ireland. An English minister was foolish enough to think that he was conciliating Ireland when he gave office to some of these men. The leader of the band was made a lord of the treasury; another was appointed a commissioner of income-tax for England; the orator of the party, a lawyer, who knew nothing of law, but had an eloquent tongue and an unabashed forehead, became solicitor-general for Ireland. The principal men in the party, including the three I have just mentioned, were four; and they were banded together in all manner of financial as well as political enterprises. They were great at starting banks, floating companies, devising and multiplying financial schemes of all kinds. Of course all this, like their political achievement, was for the good of Ireland. Things went on delight-

fully until one day the bubble suddenly burst. What happened then? I have said that four men were allied together in every thing, financial as well as political. What happened to them? It is an interesting story, and it can be told in a few sentences. The first of the four turned out to be a forger and a swindler, and escaped from justice by committing suicide on Hampstead Heath near London. The second, his brother, turned out to be a swindler; and he fled across the seas, and was gone, no man knew whither; and the House of Commons, for its own credit's sake, went through the ceremony of formally erasing his name from the historic roll of its members. The third, who had been made commissioner of income-tax, finding that a storm was coming, thoughtfully put the available proceeds of his tax into his pocket, and prudently retired to a distant country across the ocean, and disappeared from politics. Still there was the fourth, the lawyer of the tongue and the "cheek." He held his ground; and the question arose, what was the English Government to do with him? He had been mixed up in all the financial and political schemes of the others, and what was to be done with him now? The English ministers thought the matter over, and perhaps were not certain that they could obtain a conviction if

they were to put him into the dock as a criminal. Perhaps they also thought it would be inconvenient to put him on his trial, and let the whole story of his life and his associates be told to an astounded world. So, as they did not think it prudent to put him into the dock as a criminal, they put him on the bench of justice as a judge. Yes, this is the simple historical fact, without exaggeration of any kind. They made this man a judge for life on the Irish bench; and the English press and the English public of that day could not understand for the life of them why the Irish people should be dissatisfied with the administration of justice in Ireland.

Naturally this catastrophe gave a great shock to parliamentary agitation in Ireland. The Irish people became sick of it, disgusted with it. There were true and honest Irishmen still in the House of Commons, who stuck to their posts, and kept the national flag flying. But even these men were disposed rather for reform in the land system than for repeal of the union. Now, we all know what happens in any country where there is a sense of national wrong, and where for any reason the people begin to lose faith in open and constitutional agitation. All our reading of history, all our personal experience, tells us what happens then. Of course

the era of secret organization, the era of conspiracy, sets in ; so it was in Ireland. The collapse of parliamentary agitation was followed by the Fenian movement ; the effort of men undoubtedly brave, conscientious, and patriotic, to do something for their country, seeing that other men and other ways had failed. One great thing the Fenian movement did for Ireland : it roused the attention of an illustrious English statesman to the fact that there was an Irish national cause, and that there were Irishmen who knew how to die for it. Mr. Gladstone himself has told the world of this ; has told how even the very desperation of some of the deeds done, or attempts made, by the Fenians, brought the reality of the Irish question home to his mind, and set him thinking what he could do to solve the terrible problem.

Meantime, however, the movement for the restoration of the Irish national Parliament seemed to have come to a stop ; seemed, indeed, to have gone out of most men's minds altogether. Mr. Gladstone himself was still under the impression that Ireland wanted nothing more than some remedial measures, which could be accomplished for her in the imperial Parliament. For a long time there was no public and national evidence to the con-

trary; although every Irish party in the House of Commons, every party which kept up the slightest profession of representing the Irish people, maintained as a part of their public platform the right of Ireland to the restoration of her national Parliament. Nothing, however, was done to keep any strong agitation going. In the House of Commons, there were some sincere and able representatives of the national cause, who kept the light burning, who at all events did not allow it to go out altogether. There were men like the late John Francis Maguire, a powerful debater, a thorough patriot; like the late Frederick Lucas,—an Englishman by the way, but one of those Englishmen who rise up on Ireland's side in every crisis of Irish history. Frederick Lucas loved Ireland, and understood her: she will not forget him. There was Charles Gavan Duffy; there was the late Sir John Gray, father of my friend Edward Dwyer Gray, who is one of the leading members of the Irish parliamentary party. These men and a few others spoke up for Ireland still; but even they found it more practical for the hour to turn their attention to the system of land-tenure and landlordism in Ireland, with the hope of bringing about some measure of reform there. They could do but little even in that. Soon Lucas died;

Duffy went to Australia to begin a new career there, a career which turned out in every way successful and honorable. There could hardly be said to be any longer an Irish party working in the House of Commons, for the restoration of Ireland's legislative independence. It was not that the desire of the nation had chilled; it was only because the nation had lost faith in the imperial Parliament. Truly the hour was sad alike for the Irish nationalist who had no hope from parliamentary agitation, and the Irish nationalist who could not believe that an armed insurrection would have any chance of success.

To this latter class of Irishmen, I myself had come to belong. I did not believe there was the remotest ray of hope for any Irish insurrection, unless it were made at a time when England was engaged in some great foreign war. Even if such an event were to come about, and Ireland were to be aided by the arms of a foreign power, I thought it extremely probable, that, when peace came to be made, the independence of Ireland would not be rigidly insisted on as a condition of the arrangement. And then I had other ideas and hopes. I am only saying here what I have said in the House of Commons: that if I really believed there

was no possibility of our recovering our national Parliament by peaceful agitation, and if there seemed any ray of hope for an armed insurrection, I should think true nationalists justified in trying the appeal to arms, even although, as Theodore Parker once said of resistance to the fugitive-slave law cases, in so doing they dug their own graves and the graves of ten thousand men. But I had still a strong faith in the power of constitutional agitation, and of public opinion. I had also a strong faith in the ultimate sense of justice of the English people, of the great working democracy. I had lived in England for many years; I had taken part in many public movements there, and I knew something of the English democracy. Some time or other, I knew, these English democrats — I am using the word, of course, in its English sense — will have the franchise, and enfranchised they will help to give Ireland back her national Parliament.

Suddenly, no one could quite tell how, the political atmosphere of Ireland seemed to be lightened by a new hope. A new chapter of our history was to all appearance opening. Another movement was afoot for the restoration of Ireland's Parliament. The new movement sought not for repeal, but for Home Rule.

The first impulse given to the Home Rule movement was given by some of the Protestants in Ireland. They were not for the most part, this time, Protestants of the national and patriotic order, — Protestants like Wolfe Tone and Edward Fitzgerald and Smith O'Brien. The men, or at least the greater number of them, who helped to set this new movement going, were regular members of what we may call the British garrison in Ireland, men who hated every truly national memory or movement; but they were under the influence of a wild outburst of fury against Mr. Gladstone's disestablishment of the Irish State Church, and they were ready to do any thing to show their wrath. "Rather than submit to legislation of that kind," — so they said, — "rather than see religious equality, and we don't know what else, introduced into the country, let us go for Home Rule at once. We should positively have a better chance of holding our own with our own people than with Gladstone and his English Radicals." In this spirit, such Protestants and Tories as Col. King Harman joined with the nationalists in forming the new movement for Home Rule, the movement which for the first time took the name of Home Rule. King Harman and his friends were not much in earnest,

and they soon found out that religious ascendancy would have just as little chance in Ireland self-governed as in any other country self-governed; and they fell away from the cause, and became, some of them, its bitterest enemies. Irish Home Rulers were looking about vaguely for a leader, and suddenly the leader came. Mr. Isaac Butt re-appeared in public life.

Mr. Isaac Butt had begun his career as a professor in Dublin University, as a Tory and a resolute opponent of O'Connell and O'Connell's policy. He was an advocate by profession, and he so rose to a commanding position at the Irish bar. He was a really great advocate. His eloquence was at once impassioned and subtle. He could detect a flaw in a chain of evidence, or of argument, with a wonderful quickness. He could wind his reasoning in and out of and round his opponent's case; and then he could give his passionate eloquence full way, until it seemed to sweep all opposition before it. I suppose he must have come nearer to O'Connell, as orator and advocate and lawyer combined, than any other man of recent days in Ireland, although I am far indeed from suggesting that Butt was O'Connell's equal either as orator or as lawyer. He defended Smith O'Brien and Meagher when they were tried

for high treason at Clonmel in 1848. Later on, he defended the Phoenix men. Later still, he defended the Fenians. Gradually, by thus defending nationalists, he grew himself to be a nationalist. In the mean time, however, he had been for a while the spokesman and orator of the English protection party, when they tried to get up a re-actionary movement, after the leading Conservative statesmen had declared that they would make no further attempt to reverse the policy of Sir Robert Peel. Butt sat, for a short time, in the House of Commons as member for a small English borough. He was still a Tory, and, as a Tory, he got elected for an Irish constituency ; but he was fast coming round to the national creed.

Therefore, when the new Home Rule movement started, Mr. Butt was the manifest and the only leader. He had been out of Parliament for some time ; but he was easily persuaded to return to the House of Commons, and the parliamentary movement began. Mr. Butt got around him a body of nearly sixty Irish members pledged to Home Rule. Some years later Mr. Gladstone described most of these men in a phrase of unintentional aptitude, when he spoke of them as "the nominal Home Rulers." Nominal Home Rulers they were, most of

them, and nothing more. At the time it was not possible for men to get in for a popular Irish constituency without professing a devotion to Home Rule; therefore a great many men professed a devotion to Home Rule, who had not the slightest faith in the movement, and never believed the Home Rule question would give any trouble to anybody. Undoubtedly, also, many of Mr. Butt's followers, especially among the younger men who had newly come into Parliament, were sincere and earnest in their political and patriotic professions. Some of these men have since proved their sincerity by years of devotion to the national cause, under conditions hard enough to strain, now and then, the most unswerving patriotism. But the majority of the party were, in the strictest sense of the words, nominal Home Rulers. They were the best Mr. Butt could get, however, at the time. The franchise in Ireland was so restricted that the vast majority of the population had no direct part whatever in the election of a member of Parliament. The election was, to a great extent, in the hands of the landlord party and of the shopkeepers in the towns, who often were themselves dependent on the patronage of the landlords. The tenant farmers, when they had votes, were always stanch and stalwart patriots; but the

strength of the landlord class, and of those who had to depend on the landlord class, was very great, and the effect was shown in the constitution of Mr. Butt's party. Mr. Butt did the best he could, as he saw things; but his policy was barren, could be nothing but barren. His policy was to bring in, every session, a series of bills for the redress of the grievances of Ireland,—for land-tenure reform, electoral reform, municipal reform, and so forth; and to have a motion every session,—that is, every year,—in favor, not indeed of Home Rule, but of the appointment of a parliamentary committee to inquire into the nature of the Home Rule claim. The bills were, of course, rejected, session after session, by large majorities. The Home Rule motion led to what we call “a full-dress debate,” once every session; that is, once every year. Mr. Butt made a great speech; several of his followers made eloquent, argumentative, and what ought to have been convincing, speeches: but no vote was won over to their cause. The minister of the day delivered a reply, in which he complimented the Home Rule members on the eloquence and ability with which they had pleaded their national cause, and then went on to show, in a few easy sentences, that it was utterly out of the question for them to expect an

English government to treat any such demand seriously. The minister rarely condescended to sober and sustained argument. He treated the whole business as a sort of annual ceremonial, as indeed it was to a great extent; and then the division was taken, and the Home Rulers, and perhaps half a dozen English and Scotch sympathizers, went one way, and the other members of the House of Commons went the other way; and of course the motion for an inquiry into the merits of the Home Rule claim was beaten by an utterly overwhelming majority. Then the Home Rule claim was allowed to go to sleep for another session; that is, for another year. It made hardly any impression on the House of Commons. It was regarded as one of the annual performances which have to be got through, and which, after all, only waste a day or so, and can do no great harm to anybody. On the public, out of doors, the annual debate made no impression at all. The great majority of the English public cared nothing, because they knew nothing, about Home Rule. They did not know that the Irish people were in earnest in asking for Home Rule. They hardly knew that there was an avowed Home Rule party in the House of Commons. The annual performance might have gone on year after

year, to the end of time, without the Home Rule claim advancing thereby one single pace. Happily for the peaceful solution of the Irish question, there were men in Mr. Butt's party who soon chafed against his hopeless policy, and at last broke utterly away from it, and started a policy of their own. Mr. Butt endeavored to persuade them : they would not be persuaded. He endeavored to overbear them : they would not be overborne. They grew stronger as he grew weaker ; and before long his policy was thrust altogether aside, and a few daring and resolute men had entered on the policy of obstruction.

CHAPTER IV.

OBSTRUCTION.

IT was not Mr. Parnell who began, in our day, the policy of Irish obstruction. Mr. Parnell was not yet a member of the House of Commons when Mr. Biggar made his famous speech, four hours in length, and of which hardly a word was heard by the few who were in the House. But it was Mr. Parnell who first saw the use to which obstruction, systematic, organized, irrepressible obstruction, could be turned, for the purpose of forcing the claims of Ireland on the attention of England. The experiment was tried somewhat tentatively at first. Parnell seized some question in regard to his view of which he could fairly expect some public sympathy, and he obstructed the Conservative government in their work if they refused to satisfy his demand. For example, England owes to Parnell, more than to any other man, the abolition of the abominable system of flogging in the army, which

English governments had clung to after all other civilized governments had abandoned it. There was always a small philanthropic party of men in the House of Commons who opposed the system, and made endeavor at its abolition ; but they only did so in the familiar and orthodox way. They made an annual motion in favor of the abolition of flogging, or they got up a debate during the progress of the army estimates. A few speeches were made. The war minister of the day replied by insisting that the English army could not possibly be kept together unless the soldiers were well flogged ; and then a division was taken, and the philanthropists were left in a pitiful minority, and nothing more was heard of the matter for another year. Parnell showed the opponents of the lash a better way of approaching their object. He had himself a profound detestation for the flogging system, and he set to work to make manifest his sentiments by obstructing the army estimates with motions for the abolition of flogging, and incessant speeches made by his followers in support of his motions. In committee of the whole House, a member can speak as often as he pleases ; and Mr. Parnell and his followers used their privilege remorselessly in denouncing the flogging system. The Liberals were then in opposition. Sir

Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain supported Mr. Parnell and his tactics. Other Liberals, too, supported him. The thing began to look dangerous for the Government. Lord Hartington was then leader of the opposition. It was during the temporary retirement of Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Hartington at first denounced Mr. Parnell and the English Radicals who were making common cause with him. All the worse for Lord Hartington ! for English Radicals everywhere took up the cry, and Lord Hartington had to eat his words. He had actually to take up the cause himself. He had to bring forward, as leader of the opposition, a motion condemning flogging in the army and navy ; and the flogging system was doomed. It came to an end altogether soon after. Parnell himself learned a great deal from the result of his policy on the army regulation struggle. Perhaps it was then it first became quite clear to his mind, that thus, and not otherwise, was the way to be opened for the true movement to Home Rule. Certainly from that time he was a recognized power in the House of Commons. From that time Irish obstruction was a definite policy with a definite purpose.

Nothing, however, could have been more misunderstood in the beginning, and for many years of its

working, than that policy of obstruction. Let it be said, to start with, that obstruction was no new device, originating in the purely mischievous brains of the Irish national party. Obstruction is an art that has always been practised for one object or another by politicians and parties in the House of Commons. Sir Robert Peel, the great Sir Robert, practised a policy of systematic obstruction to resist Lord Grey's Reform Bill in 1831 and 1832. This obstruction was conducted by means of a regularly appointed committee, and it used to occupy whole nights in the purely and nakedly obstructive work of proposing and supporting alternate motions "that this debate be now adjourned," and "that this House do now adjourn." Mr. Gladstone led a policy of pure obstruction for the sake of resisting the passage of the Divorce Bill, a measure to which he had the strongest conscientious objection. Mr. John Francis Maguire, of whom I have already spoken, and whose integrity and honor were acknowledged in his lifetime and after his death by men of all parties, formulated deliberately a policy of obstruction, — he called it obstruction, — as the only way by which any Irish party could obtain a hearing for Irish grievances within the walls of the House of Commons. Mr. Maguire again and again

advocated and urged such a policy ; but it was not taken up by the Irish members of that time, and his wise idea was never allowed to test itself in action. Since that day my old and esteemed friend Sir John Pope Hennessy, now governor of the Mauritius, then member for an Irish county, made himself famous as an obstructionist. He was a follower and an intense admirer of Mr. Disraeli ; and it was in Mr. Disraeli's interests, and often at Mr. Disraeli's suggestion, that he carried out his bold and skilful plans for the obstruction and delay of ministerial measures when Mr. Disraeli was leading the opposition. Mr. James Lowther, who several times held office under a Conservative government, and was for a while chief secretary to the lord lieutenant of Ireland, was celebrated in the House for his early career of dashing and unabashed obstruction. Sir Charles Dilke, at one period of his political life, was as indomitable and fearless an obstructionist as the House of Commons has ever seen.

Obstruction is, then, and always was, a recognized weapon of parliamentary warfare. Let me assure my American readers that any one who disputes this assertion either does not know what he is talking about, or gives a denial which is meant to deceive. Why, then, was there such a shriek of

universal indignation against the Irish obstructionists? For one reason, because they were Irish, because they refused to consult the convenience or the interests of either of the two great political parties. It seemed, to the ordinary British member of Parliament, as if the world were coming to an end, when he heard these Irishmen declaring in the House of Commons, and declaring with all appearance of thorough sincerity, that they did not care three straws for the convenience of the Liberals, or of the Tories; for the opinions of the London daily papers, or the London clubs. I do not say, however, that this is all. It is not by any means all. Up to that time, obstruction, as practically known to the House of Commons, had taken the form of obstruction to some one particular measure. When Peel obstructed the Reform Bill, he did not say, or allow it to be understood, that he would obstruct every measure introduced by the Government of Lord Grey and Lord John Russell. When Gladstone obstructed the Divorce Bill, his policy was known to apply to the Divorce Bill only. When Pope Hennessy obstructed for Disraeli, he always at least professed to be opposing only some one particular measure; and, although he and his leader may have had in their

own minds some clear idea of delaying and discrediting the whole work of the administration, yet they certainly never allowed any intention of that kind to find expression in words. But Mr. Parnell and his party boldly and repeatedly avowed their intention to obstruct all parliamentary business until Irish grievances had had a fair hearing. This was what exasperated and infuriated the average Englishman. The average Englishman knew nothing then about Home Rule; and for him to be told in the coolest way that no work was to be done in the English Parliament until the Home Rule question had been duly considered, was about as trying to the temper as to be informed that some naughty child had determined never to cease squalling in his ears until the squaller got the moon for a plaything. The comic periodical, "Punch," actually did suggest, in not very decorous fashion, that the obstructives should be treated in just the way which the importunate infant would be likely to come in for if he kept up his wailings too long. Let me do justice to the average Englishman. He had no reason to suppose, educated in the way he had been, that the six or seven men who were known as obstructionists really represented a national cause, and had a people behind them. These men had come into

Parliament without any previous political career. Not one of them was known even by name to the English newspaper-reader. The whole lot were disavowed by all the other Irish members of Parliament, including the recognized leader of the Home Rule party, Isaac Butt himself. A member of the Irish Home Rule party publicly denounced Mr. Parnell in the House of Commons, as an adventurer who was willing, for the sake of his own personal ambition, to drag his country through mire and blood. The "adventurer" was a man of high social position, the descendant of a brilliant and a famous ancestry, who was neglecting and ruining his once fine property for the sake of fighting Ireland's cause in a chill and hostile House of Commons. At that time the suffrage in Ireland was high and narrow, and it was hard indeed for any man to get into Parliament without the support of the landlord and the local aristocracy. Therefore the great majority of the members of the Home Rule party were not nationalist in any genuine sense; and Mr. Parnell terrified them with his awful ideas of patriotic duty, and the hideous sacrifices he proposed to exact. True, he was willing and resolved to make such sacrifices himself,—was already making them; but what comfort was that

to those who were not willing to make them? What did the average Irish member, even of the Home Rule party, — what did he come into Parliament for? He came because he was ambitious of social or political distinction; he wanted to make a figure in debate. If he was a lawyer, he wanted to rise to the bench; and, for an Irish lawyer, the vestibule to the judicial bench is almost always the House of Commons. If he had no political or public ambition, he wanted to get into London society; he wanted to be invited to dinner at the house of some great minister; he wanted to have his wife and his daughters asked to the big official parties at the house of the prime minister and the foreign secretary. Something like this was what he really wanted. What he said by speech or vote once in every session, — that is, once in every year, — was, that he wanted Home Rule for Ireland. Fancy his feelings of natural irritation against a young man who, himself belonging to the higher rank, actually did not care about his own class more than about any other; who would not go to a Whig or Tory prime minister's dinner if he were besought to do so on bended knees; who laid it down as a doctrine, that, while things were as they were, earnest Irish members ought to stand reso-

lutely out of English society. Fancy with what scorn and anger our Irish members would repudiate, in the hearing of English members, any suggestion about "that young fellow Parnell" being entitled to speak for any class in Ireland! No doubt, the scorn would be all the more scornful, the anger all the more angry, because this Irish member was feeling within himself a growing and an agonizing suspicion that the young fellow Parnell would be likely to have the country with him some day; and where then would be the dinners and the balls, and the various delights of London society? "It's all very well for Parnell," I heard an outspoken grumbler of this order once complain. "He hasn't any wife, and he hasn't any daughters; and he could have all that social sort of thing if he wanted it anyhow. He ought to make some allowance for others." Naturally, the average English member took his opinions about Ireland from this average Irish member. I am not saying any thing unreasonable, any thing that ought even to surprise a reader, when I say that the men who hated Parnell most of all were to be found at one time in the ranks of that very party to which he himself belonged.

It is not wonderful if under such conditions English statesmen and the English Parliament re-

garded Parnell and his party as mere wanton mischief makers. Yet the little band whom Parnell inspired and led, had before them a high and a clear purpose; a purpose sure in the end to bring benefit and blessing to England as well as to Ireland. The House of Commons was overloaded with business. The House of Commons undertakes and attempts to manage much of the local affairs of all the counties and towns in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Not a gas-bill, a water-bill, a drainage-bill, a railway-bill, for the smallest town, but has to come before the House, and pass through all its stages there. I have sometimes wondered within myself which was the greater absurdity, — to assume that the House of Commons understood the local wants and interests of some great city like Manchester or Glasgow better than the people of Manchester and Glasgow, the people who have made Manchester and Glasgow, or to assume that the time of the House of Commons and of the imperial Parliament was properly occupied in settling the gas and water arrangements of some small country hamlet. The House of Commons undertook to manage all this vast complication, this unending supply, of local business, and also to manage the affairs of the empire.

One inevitable result of such a system was, that the common interests of the countries were utterly neglected. The railway companies, the gas companies, the great municipal corporations, managed to get their business pushed through Parliament somehow. Foreign questions, threatening to seek their solution by way of war, had to be debated and attended to. But everybody's business was nobody's business. The measures which concerned the vast majority of the people of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, being in theory everybody's business, became in practice nobody's business. Measures of the most vital interest to the community, measures affecting the health, the comfort, the well-being, the very lives, of the poor and the workers, were postponed session after session, for ten, twenty, thirty years. Many a time have I heard some statesman in office introduce a measure which he thus described as necessary to the welfare and to the lives of some great class of workers in the community; and the same measure has been postponed year after year, and is not yet passed into law. In this admitted fact, the little band who were led by Parnell found their cue. Irish interests suffered with English and Scottish interests; but the Irish members maintained, that,

speaking on behalf of Ireland, they had a special cause of complaint. Therefore, what they said to the House of Commons was, in substance, this: "We do not want to be in your imperial Parliament. We ask nothing better than to be allowed to relieve you of all our national and local business, and to manage it for ourselves in an Irish Parliament in Dublin. We admit that the affairs of England and of Scotland are sacrificed to your present preposterous system, and we are sorry for it; but if the English and Scotch members are willing to put up with that state of things, we have no right to complain. We find, that, as things now go, we have nothing left but to fight for ourselves and for our own country; and we say to you, then, that if you will not give a full hearing to the grievances of Ireland, we will not allow you to get through any other business whatever."

There is a charming poem by my friend Mr. William Allingham, called "Laurence Bloomfield in Ireland," in which we find a classic story thrillingly told as an illustration of the hero's feelings on some subject of interest to his country. A Roman emperor is persecuted by the petition of a poor widowed woman, who prays for redress

of some wrong done to her and her children. The great emperor is far too great, his mind is taken up too much with questions of imperial interest, to have any leisure for examining into, or even for reading, this poor woman's claim. One morning he is riding forth of his palace gates, at the head of his splendid retinue, and the widow comes in his way, right in his path, and holds up her petition again, and implores him to read it. He will not read, and is about to pass scornfully on, when she flings herself on the ground before him, herself and her little children, just in the front of his horse's hoofs, and she declares that if he will not stay and hear her prayer, he shall not pass on his way unless he passes over the bodies of her and of her children. And then, says Mr. Allingham, "the Roman," who must have had something of the truly imperial in him, "wheeled his horse and heard." This was the feeling with which Parnell and his party went into the work of obstruction. They were determined to fling themselves down in the way of the imperial Parliament, and stop its movement until it heard their claims, or passed on its way over their trampled bodies.

I have spoken of the manner in which this policy

was misunderstood and misrepresented almost everywhere, almost by every one in England, for a long time. Let me give one curious example the other way. At the time when the fury against obstruction and its Irish organizers was at its highest, I happened to sit at a London dinner-table, next to a young lady, member of a family which bears a name renowned through all the world. She was not a politician, and she was not naturally, by education, habits, or class, in any manner of sympathy with Irish claims. The talk was of Irish obstruction, and some unpleasant things were said, which I, out of consideration for my hostess, affected not to hear. The young lady suddenly said to me, "I suppose that after all there is something to be said for this Irish obstruction. Is it not this,—is it not that you think you have to get the attention of a man who is deaf and also fast asleep? You know you can only rouse him by shaking his shoulders and shouting in his ears; but you do not mean to say that you consider shaking by the shoulders and shouting in the ears are the proper accompaniments of a civil conversation under the ordinary conditions of life." I assured the young lady that no member of the party of obstructives could have possibly given a better or clearer definition of the policy

which the party was carrying out. We were satisfied that our duty was to rouse the English public, deaf hitherto as regarded our claims, and just then fast asleep; and we knew that there was no other way of getting attention than the process of shaking by the shoulder and shouting in the ear. We were convinced that if once we could get the full attention of the public of England, Scotland, and Wales, we should be sure of success. The only way to obtain a hearing was by making the House of Commons itself the platform from which to speak forth our demands. But we knew that mere speech-making of the ordinary and familiar kind, even in the House of Commons, would never get a hearing from the public. We knew, on the other hand, that if we set about to stop all other business but ours, we could not fail to get the attention of the public. Of course we should be denounced for some time; for a long time, perhaps. But sooner or later reasonable people would begin to ask, "What is the demand which these Irishmen are making? What is the cause which they are advocating in this extraordinary and hitherto unheard-of way? They are defying all authority and all public opinion; they are making themselves hated; they are undergoing unspeakable fatigue; they

are braving positive danger,—how if, after all, there should be some justice in their demands?” If it once could come to this, we felt that all would be well.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP.

I WAS not one of those earliest obstructives ; the system had been in practice for some time before I had an opportunity of taking part in it. But I may venture to say that I was one of the very first who saw from the outside the policy and the objects of the obstructionists, and had faith in them. I came into the House of Commons in time to take a part in the struggle which abolished flogging in the army and navy. I may add that I was elected a member of the House of Commons without any reference whatever to obstruction ; without having given any promise to join Mr. Parnell's little band. I went into the House of Commons determined to see things for myself, and to give my support to whatever party or section I had reason to believe was doing the best work for Ireland.

I believe most of my friends took it for granted that my influence, such as it was, would be given to

those who were called the moderate men : Mr. Butt, Mr. Shaw, and the rest. The struggle against the flogging system and its success satisfied me as to the wisdom of Mr. Parnell's policy. I remember that at the time Mr. Chamberlain told me it also satisfied him. I was convinced of the absolute sincerity and single-mindedness of Mr. Parnell ; and I saw in him a man of genius unmistakably sent to do a certain work, himself hardly conscious as yet of any particular mission. Never was there a human being who gave himself less of the ways and the airs of a man with a mission. Always plain, simple, straightforward, intensely practical, he hardly ever talked of any thing but the work of the very hour, of the very moment ; he did not seem to be looking forward into any far future. He did not seem to be capable of forming an abstract idea about any thing. I never heard him speak of the sun-burst, of the ancient glories of Ireland. I never heard him talk of freedom and the brotherhood of nations. I never heard him use a rhetorical or poetical expression of any kind. For all an outsider could see, Parnell's whole soul and sense were always absorbed in the fate of the particular clause of the particular bill which the House was then trying to discuss, and which he was trying to obstruct. You saw the

heroic in him only in his absolute freedom from any manner of self-conceit, or self-sufficiency, or self of any kind. He seemed to me one of the very few human beings I had ever known, in whom there was neither vanity nor fear. There was something almost mechanical in his way of compelling himself to do things which he did not like to do. He always hated speech-making, and he was always making speeches — because he thought he ought to make them. He believed himself to be an incurably bad speaker; and yet he kept on speaking, as if, like Charles James Fox, he was determined to improve himself at the expense of his audience. Under all his manner of proud, cold, imperturbable composure, we who knew him knew that there was a temperament singularly nervous and sensitive. Sometimes he shrank so much from the odious task of delivering a speech, that he had to force himself to the task, to drive his spirit at it as one may drive a horse at a fence. To other men, to many other men in the House, speech-making was a joy, a delight: to Parnell it was always an abhorred nuisance. He succeeded, unconsciously, in improving to a surprising degree his style of speaking; he made a greater advance in that way than perhaps any other man in the House during the same time. An orator in the

higher sense of the word he never could be, for he lacks imagination and poetic emotion ; but so far as the plainest, clearest arrangement of thought and argument and words can make a man eloquent, Parnell certainly is eloquent. Mr. Gladstone has said of Parnell that not even Lord Palmerston himself was so consummate a master of the art of saying exactly what he wanted to say and not a word more. There are several men in Parnell's party far more eloquent than he ; but no man's phrases and sayings stamp themselves on the public mind, and will live as long as some of Parnell's. His style of speaking somehow corresponds curiously with his personal appearance and presence. The tall form, once straight as that of an athlete, now prematurely bowed by illness and weariness ; the clear-cut, handsome face, clearly cut as that of a Greek statue, and almost as pallid as the marble of the statue ; the subdued tone, and composed manner of speaking ; the self-control which crushes into submission all natural nervous excitability, and enables him, in the midst of no matter what conditions of surrounding excitement, to maintain the appearance of a cold and almost icy quietude, — all this harmonizes perfectly with the keen, direct, utterly unrhctorical style which sends each argument straight and sharp to its

purpose, as an arrow is sent to its mark. One of the qualities which specially inspire Parnell's followers with confidence in him is his unerring power of forming a judgment as to the best course to be taken under suddenly changed conditions, and where there is no time for deliberate choice. Then he shows the instinct, the genius, of the born commander. That gift has never failed him in the hour of need.

I am not engaged in writing the history of the Parnell movement. That work has been done in thorough and admirable fashion already, by my friend Mr. T. P. O'Connor. I strongly advise every American who wants to know all about the movement, to trace its currents back to the fountain-head, to know the living men, as well as their forerunners who have ceased to live, — I strongly advise every such American to read Mr. O'Connor's book. I am only endeavoring to make clear to American readers, in a sort of rapid outline sketch, the case we have to make for Ireland, and the manner in which we have conducted that case in the imperial Parliament. Mr. Parnell then broke away from Mr. Butt's leadership, and it became with every day more and more clear that the vast majority of the Irish people were entirely with him. Butt, however, was not disturbed in his leadership,

— his nominal leadership. It would have been idle cruelty to disturb him, for every one knew that his life was flickering fast away. He had lived many lives; he had crushed into his career too much work and too much pleasure. His was a strenuous nature, incapable of taking care of itself; and he sank prematurely into death. Then Mr. William Shaw was elected leader, and we all hoped much from him. He was decidedly an able man; he was an Ulster Presbyterian, who had been a minister of religion and a preacher, but who turned to commercial and political pursuits, and had been remarkably successful thus far in both. He had a somewhat rough and heavy manner of speaking, but he was a very effective speaker for all that, and had distinguished himself years before in the great debates on Mr. Gladstone's bill for the disestablishment of the Irish State Church. Although he could not compare with Butt as orator and parliamentarian, yet we expected from him greater energy than Butt had lately shown; and some of us believed that he would take warning from Butt's mistake and Butt's failure, and would see that the country demanded really energetic action from the Irish party and its leaders. Some of us, too, believed that it would be a very good thing to have behind the leader,

occasionally pushing him on if needs were, a section of uncompromising and irrepressible men. It would, we thought, be an advantage sometimes in our parliamentary tactics, if our leader were able to say to the Government, "I am offering you the very maximum of our terms. You will never get off so cheaply again. There are men behind me who think I am letting you off too cheaply even now; but I can give you these terms now, now, now, if you will accept them. If you refuse them, —well, you will never get the same offer again; and the longer you delay, the harder will be the terms." It seemed to me, therefore, that in having Shaw for our parliamentary leader, with Parnell behind him, we were making a very satisfactory arrangement. It did not turn out so. Shaw displayed no energy, and very soon sank into the position of a merely nominal leader. He had no heart for the work: he could not bear to put the House of Commons against him; he could not stand up against the bellows and the hate of that very wild mob, an excited House of Commons. He did not in his secret soul really believe in the obstruction policy at all; he regarded it simply as the freak or the craze of the moment, designed to amuse the Irish people for the time, and destined

to pass away without having accomplished any purpose. No man with such fears and feelings could have made any thing of the position Shaw had come to hold. Certainly he made nothing of it.

The general elections of 1880 came on the country suddenly, and as a surprise. Parnell was in the United States, raising money for the relief of the Irish peasantry, who were suffering from a winter of agricultural failure and distress; raising money, also, to carry on our political agitation in the House of Commons. He hurried home, and flung himself into the electoral campaign. He took the bold position of a leader, and he put forward his own candidates, in one or two instances against the candidates approved of and supported by Mr. Shaw. Despite all the influences against him, and the restricted nature of the Irish suffrage, he was successful beyond the utmost hopes of his followers. He turned out some of the greatest and most powerful Irish landlords, Liberal as well as Tory, and put in followers of his own in their places. Some of the best, the ablest, the most eloquent, the most devoted men of the Irish nationalist party, came into Parliament for the first time in this early part of 1880. Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. James O'Kelly, Mr. T.

D. Sullivan, Mr. Leamy, were among them. Mr. Parnell could count on a considerable number of followers, at once capable and devoted. No country ever had better men to serve her. Still the immediate effect of the elections was to split the party into two. It came about in this way: Our resolve, after Butt's death, was to elect, at the opening of every session, a chairman and vice-chairman. We were not going to have any more leaders in perpetuity. The newer and more earnest men among the new-comers were of opinion, — and so, indeed, were some of the old guard as well, — that Mr. Shaw could no longer be endured as a leader; and they proposed at once to give the title of leader to the man who had shown that he could lead, — to Parnell himself. Parnell was not in favor of this step. He did not wish to be leader. He thought the time had not come; that he was too young a man for such a position. His idea was that Mr. Shaw would have to be displaced, but that another member of the party, not Parnell, should be elected chairman. I, for one, was strongly opposed to this, and told Parnell privately that if there was to be any change I would myself insist on proposing him for chairman, if no one else did. But I told him, too, that I personally

thought it would be better at that moment to leave things as they were. Things, however, could not be left as they were. I think now that I was mistaken in my opinion at the time. Mr. Shaw was deposed, and Mr. Parnell was elected, not, however, by a very large majority; and Mr. Shaw, and nearly all of those who supported him, passed from our side, and went over into the ranks of our enemies. All those who were called, and who delighted to be called, "the moderate men," were gone from among us; were gone to strengthen the hands of our enemies.

Of our enemies? — after the general elections of 1880? — our enemies? Did not Gladstone come into power? Was he not the prime minister of England, with Sir Charles Dilke and Joseph Chamberlain members of his administration? Where, then, were the enemies in power? The truth is, that the domestic crisis in our little party was but an incident of another and a greater crisis. We had helped the Liberals into office; we had agitated for them, struggled for them, given them the benefit of the Irish vote everywhere. We were satisfied that Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals would give the fullest and fairest hearing to every demand the Irish national representatives had to

make. We knew — some of us did, at least — that Mr. Gladstone had in his heart much sympathy with the national aspiration, and that he only wanted to be convinced of the reasonableness and the practical nature of the demand for Home Rule. He wanted to be convinced of two things, — first, that the demand was a really national demand; and, next, that a practicable scheme of Home Rule could be made out, which would give Ireland the right to manage her own affairs, while preserving all the integrity of the imperial system. Mr. Gladstone wanted to have his doubts removed on these two points; and that done, he would be a Home Ruler. No one can say that he was not perfectly right in suspending his judgment while these doubts remained yet unsolved. He was only following out the clear line of duty for any English statesman. But the secession from the ranks of the Irish party unquestionably went far to confirm both his doubts. The men who seceded with Mr. Shaw were, as a rule, all highly respectable men. They were men of good position; they were, on an average, older and more mature than our men. Some of them were men of undoubted ability and sincerity; some had done good work in Ireland and for Ireland. Not a few, however,

were mere Whig place-hunters of the old-fashioned order. When these men all left us and turned against us, when they made it only too evident that they had no particular zeal for that Home Rule cause which they still professed to profess, — if I may use such a phrase, — then, of course, it was not surprising that Mr. Gladstone should find his doubts as to the genuine popularity of the Home Rule movement gaining new force. Nor would it have been surprising, if, accepting as true the assertions of Mr. Shaw and his friends, that the policy of the obstructives was only a new toy to amuse the country for a brief season, and then to be thrown aside, Mr. Gladstone should have thought in his secret heart that a country which could be thus beguiled was hardly ripe for the work of national self-government.

Mr. Shaw and his friends did not separate themselves from us on the ground merely that we had not elected Mr. Shaw as our leader. Indeed, some four or five of those who had voted for Shaw as chairman of the party, proved themselves afterwards to be among the sincerest and most devoted followers of Mr. Parnell's policy. Mr. Shaw and his colleagues soon found other reason for open severance from us. In the House of Commons, as most

Americans know, the political views of the various sections of men are denoted by the places in which they sit. There are two broad and obvious distinctions : the ministerial side of the House, and the opposition side. The members of the government, and those who support them, sit on the right hand of Mr. Speaker ; the opposition, on his left. But then there is also an important subdivision of benches and of men. Half-way down the benches on either side, runs a transverse passage from the side wall to the floor of the House, and this passage is called the gangway. "Below the gangway" is a phrase of real political significance in the House of Commons, and in English political life. The men who sit below the gangway are considered to be more or less independent in their action. Those who sit below the gangway on the ministerial side are indeed supporters of the ministry and the ministerial policy, but they do not give themselves out as thick-and-thin supporters ; they claim, or are at all events traditionally understood to claim, a certain right of private judgment. In the same way the men who sit below the gangway on the side of opposition profess a general allegiance to the leaders of opposition, but do not acknowledge themselves bound to follow that leadership whithersoever it may

think fit to go. Naturally this "below the gang-way" independence is much more of a reality among the Liberals than among the Tories. It is one of the conditions of a Liberal party's existence, that some of its members should wish to go faster and farther than others. But the ordinary duty of a Tory party is merely to resist change, and there is therefore little occasion or opportunity for independence of judgment. Now, then, we were to have a change of government, and consequently a general change of places, in the House of Commons. The Liberals, who had been sitting in opposition, would cross the floor to the right of Mr. Speaker. The Conservatives were doomed to take their places on his left, in what is called the cold shade of opposition. Where were the Irish members to sit?

Where, of course,—Mr. Shaw and his friends contended,—but with their allies the Liberals, led by Mr. Gladstone? "We have brought them back to office, and to power; they are pledged to do great things for Ireland. Are we going to draw away from them, and to sit with our natural enemies, the Tory opposition?" This seemed at first a reasonable declaration. But there was another side

to the question. "We, the Irish nationalist members," said the followers of Mr. Parnell, — "we represent a principle, an idea, not a mere party. We are in opposition to every English government which does not pledge itself to Home Rule. We can make no distinction of persons in that regard. We have great faith in Mr. Gladstone; but neither he nor any of his administration has made one single public profession of sympathy with Home Rule. Some of the individual men are with us, we know, but they have made, as yet, no public declaration of that kind; and there are many of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues who are not in the least likely to have any manner of sympathy with our cause. Who believes, for instance, that the Marquis of Hartington is in favor of Home Rule? Why, then, should we attach ourselves to the tail of the Liberal party? Our place is still, and probably will be for a long time to come, on the benches of opposition. Were Mr. Gladstone's Government to pass every measure of minor reform for Ireland which Irish members could ask, we must still stand out in resolute attitude of formal opposition, so long as that Government denies us our supreme national claim. We must maintain the unbroken continuity of that

national protest which Ireland has been making for eighty years against the suppression of her national Parliament. To attach ourselves now to the Liberal party, to consent to renounce our attitude of opposition, would be to haul down the national flag, to surrender the national principle."

That was the view which prevailed with the friends and followers of Mr. Parnell. Mr. Shaw and his companions held the other view. We remained in our old places on the opposition benches. They crossed the floor, and sat with the ministerialists. The split was complete. One or two true men who at first went with Shaw, believing him to be right, afterwards changed their minds for good and honest reason, and came back to us, and staid with us ; but, save for these exceptions, the division was final. Mr. Shaw and his section were thenceforth our enemies. In many a crisis in the dark years that followed, I have remembered the words of Macbeth, and have thought how different might have been some of our struggles against coercion, if only we had the full strength of our party with us :—

"Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home."

But they left us at our hour of need ; and a heavy penalty they had to pay for it afterwards, when Ireland got her chance of pronouncing judgment upon them.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT CAME OF OBSTRUCTION.

WE were waiting to see what the Government would do. We had no expectation of any movement being made in the direction of Home Rule as yet; but we were anxious about the land question. There had been a very severe winter in Ireland, and, in consequence, much distress. During that winter the famous Land League was established by Mr. Parnell and Mr. Davitt. The landlord party were shrieking aloud against the Land League, and calling on the castle authorities in Dublin to put it down. During the later months of the Tory Government there had been a ridiculous attempt at a state prosecution of Parnell and several of his colleagues, — a prosecution which utterly broke down. Now that the Liberals were in office, we had great expectations of a good land bill; some measure to prevent unjust and wanton evictions, and to prepare the way for the establishment of a great system of

peasant proprietary. Mr. Gladstone had intrusted the management of Irish affairs to the late Mr. W. E. Forster. The lord-lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Cowper, was not a man of any statesmanlike capacity; and Mr. Forster as chief secretary for Ireland — chief secretary to the lord-lieutenant is the exact title of the office — had Ireland in his own hands. We Irishmen were all well pleased with the appointment. Mr. Forster, when a young man, became known to the people of Ireland by the efforts which he made, in co-operation with his father, to relieve the famine-stricken peasantry in 1846 and 1847. If I remember rightly, the elder Forster died in Ireland at the time. We all felt sure that Mr. Forster's sympathies would go cordially with the Irish people. The first session of the new Government was short; for, by the time the elections were over, the spring had well-nigh gone by. We did not suppose the Government could do much to help us, that session. On our urgency they brought in a short bill to stay evictions for the time; but the House of Lords — a house of landlords — promptly threw it out. The session came to an end. When Parliament was called together in 1881, we were informed that the Government intended to bring in a land bill and a coercion bill; and that the coercion

bill was to come first. The Radical Government was to inaugurate its work in Ireland by a coercion bill. This was the advice of Mr. Forster: he insisted, as a condition of his remaining in office, that he must be allowed to have a stern coercion measure to begin with. I do not believe there is any one rational man in English politics now who does not admit that Mr. Forster's policy was a fatal blunder. The announcement was met with a cry of disappointment and anger from the Irish people. The Government had declared war against us. We, for our part, declared war against the Government. Our hopes from the Liberal alliance were gone. We had no course left but to fight the coercion bill at every stage and step and by every means which the Constitution and the rules of Parliament put in our power. Mr. Forster, who had begun, I am satisfied, in the best spirit towards the Irish people, seemed to have come to hate them. He had misunderstood them from the first. He was apparently under the impression that they would endure meekly a coercion bill, if only he were to speak them fair meantime, and promise them that a land bill should follow. He did not understand that they would naturally resent a coercion bill more bitterly if it came from the hands of those whom they had believed to be

their friends, than if it came from those whom they knew to be their enemies. Even if the Government had brought in the land bill first and the coercion bill afterwards, there might have been some hope of continued amity; but, as it was, Mr. Forster's advice proved fatal.

I would ask my American readers to consider what was then the position of Mr. Parnell's party. We were left alone to front the situation, and take our resolve. Our resolve was soon taken: we were bound, at any risk, to resist the passing of the coercion bill. There was really no excuse for such a measure. Ireland was disturbed in certain districts, — disturbed by merely agrarian disturbance, the trouble all arising out of the failure, or partial failure, of the crops, and the frequent and cruel evictions. The very knowledge that Mr. Gladstone was going to bring in a land bill for the benefit of the tenants and the restraint of the landlord's odious power was, for the present, only a fresh stimulus to the evicting and rack-renting land-owners to make hay while their sinister sun yet shone; to screw all they could out of the soil and the tenants while yet the screw was fully theirs to use. Therefore the landlord evicted, and the evicted man sometimes had his wild revenge; but the ordinary law was

quite strong enough for any cases with which law could deal. There were cases with which law could not deal. When a harsh landlord was fired at from behind a hedge, — when he was killed even, — it was sometimes found impossible to get any evidence on which to convict. Even those who hated the deed sometimes felt in their own persons so keen a perception of the nature of the provocation as to be unwilling to give up the breaker of the law to justice. All this is very deplorable ; but all this is in human nature, and would happen anywhere under the like conditions ; but in cases of that kind there was no use of a coercion act. A coercion act could not authorize any judge and jury to declare a man guilty when there was no evidence against him ; and the sympathy with the crime came from just the same sources as the crime itself, — the rack-rent and the eviction. We felt all this ; and we felt that all the strength we had must be given to the resistance of coercion. Ireland had always been governed by coercion. We saw that the time had come to resist any more coercion measures, even though they came from men declaring themselves our friends, and declaring, too, that coercion was a necessary preliminary to land reform. If you cannot govern Ireland without coercion, we said, then, in Heaven's name,

cease to try to govern at all. You confess your own incapacity to govern the country, by your very demand for this measure, without which you say the country cannot be governed. Cannot be governed? Well, perhaps not; not by *you*. Give *us* a trial: let Irishmen manage their own domestic affairs for themselves, and we shall see whether Ireland cannot be ruled without coercion bills.

We were then about twenty strong, all told; and the House of Commons contains some six hundred and fifty members. With the exception of some half a dozen stout English Radicals who were always on our side, the whole House was against us. Every man's hand was against us, but I am bound to admit that our hand was against every man. We made a great many speeches in those days. The House of Commons did not always listen to us, but we made our speeches all the same. We kept the House sitting through long and weary nights; we kept the House sitting once from four o'clock on the Monday afternoon until six o'clock on the following Wednesday evening, no intermission of debate all that time. We went in for open and avowed obstruction; we declared that, so long as we could, we would resist the Coercion Bill. Then they tried to amend their procedure, and made all

sorts of new rules to introduce a closure, meant, of course, only for the Irish members, — I mean those who called themselves emphatically the Irish members. Once or twice the Speaker accomplished a very *coup d'état*, and brought a long debate to a sudden close. We were each of us suspended from the service of the House. We were all of us expelled from the House in a body on one memorable evening; each of us refusing to leave the House until the sergeant-at-arms had gone through the formula of using force to carry out the mandate of the majority. Of course we came back again next day, or on whatever day the sentence of suspension expired; and we went on with our work of obstruction as if nothing had happened. We were doing just what we wanted to do; we were arousing the attention of England and Scotland and the civilized world. Our cause was gaining every day in Ireland, and among the Irish in America and Australia. Whenever chance threw an election in our way by the promotion, resignation, or death of some Whig Irish member, we sent our own candidate forward, and he was elected by an overwhelming majority if the opponents ventured on a contest. Great meetings were being held all over Ireland, which we attended as often as we could;

and we saw with our own eyes that the whole country was rallying to our side. We felt safe and tranquil; we knew that Ireland was with us; we said to ourselves, "Yet a little, and England, Scotland, and Wales will be with us too."

Which came to pass. In the old days when we were as yet only seven or eight, we used to take a great many divisions in the House of Commons. A division in the House of Commons is a process which occupies some fifteen or twenty minutes in its operation. If an Irish member happened to differ very often in the course of a sitting from the opinion of the majority of the House, and chose to give expression and form to his differing opinion through the constitutional and altogether legitimate medium of a division, the result would at least be, that some intervals of relief were secured for outworn orators on the Parnellite benches. A division in the House of Commons is not taken in the same way as a division in any American legislative chamber of which I know any thing. In the House of Commons the plan is, that all those who vote "aye" pass through one lobby, and all who vote "no" pass through the other. The lobbies are long, spacious corridors or ante-rooms, running each one the whole length of the chamber itself; the two belt round

the chamber like a girdle, and each lobby will hold some hundreds of men. Now, when we took a division in those old days, we seven or eight Irishmen passed into one lobby, and the whole House of Commons streamed down the other. We had in the House at that time a genial, not to say jovial, Irish member, a man who, although of the landlord class, very often gave us his sympathy and his vote. He was not much good at the making of speeches, and so, I suppose, he thought he was bound to keep up our spirits by his odd humors and his pleasant ways. Sometimes when we were going through the division lobby, we poor forlorn seven or eight dragging our slow footsteps along that lengthy, lonely corridor, while the whole House of Commons was streaming blithely down the other lobby, our good-humored friend would appear in front of us, and waving his right arm encouragingly over his head would exclaim in the most cheery tone, "Well, boys, here we are again in our thousands!" Or some other time while the same process was going on, our friend would be seen close up to the still-unopened door of the division lobby at the farther end, and he would all of a sudden come to a stand, and throw his arms wildly out behind him, and he would be heard to cry in panic-stricken voice, "Keep back, boys! Don't be

crushing on in that way ! There's room enough for us all ! I tell you we'll all get through in time, every one ; only don't crush us against the doors."

Our good-humored friend is not now in the House of Commons or in public life. I thought of him a good deal one memorable morning in the House of Commons in the session of 1886. I thought of him ; and it was borne in upon my mind, that if he were then a member of Parliament he might have seen his whimsical fantasy actually turned to reality ; he might have found himself in a fair way to be crushed against the door of that same lobby by the crowd of eager, impassioned men, hurrying to record their votes for Home Rule. That was on a memorable night, or rather morning, in the session of 1886, when I found myself passing down that same lobby, no longer one of a little group of seven or eight Home Rulers, but one of a party of three hundred and eleven Home Rulers led by Mr. Gladstone himself. What had brought about that marvellous change in so short a space of time ? What, indeed, under Heaven, but our much-misunderstood, much-ridiculed, much-denounced obstruction ? We had done what we said we would do and could do : we had roused the whole mind and heart of true British liberalism to a recognition of the justice of our case.

We knew that if we could only get a hearing, we must win our cause ; and we persevered until we got a hearing. Mr. Gladstone's recent Reform Bill, on which Liberals and Tories were at last united, — the Tories helping only of course because they could not hinder, and wanted to try to make the best of things for their own sakes, — that Reform Bill gave to the two islands a representation broader and better than they ever had before. It gave the franchise to some two millions of new voters. In Ireland it enabled the great mass of the population for the first time to enforce their political convictions by a vote. The result in Ireland was that we carried eighty-six of the constituencies out of the whole hundred and three. It may be pointed out, too, that there are only one hundred and one seats which we could possibly have contested. The University of Dublin has two representatives in the House of Commons ; but then, the University of Dublin elects by virtue of its own peculiar academic franchise, with which the general public have nothing to do. There were, therefore, really one hundred and one seats to be contested ; and out of these hundred and one seats, the nationalist party captured eighty-six. Not merely did they carry all these seats, but in almost every case in which there was a contest the

nationalists won by enormous and overwhelming majorities. As for the "nominal Home Rulers," the men who had fallen away from us in the hour of danger and darkness, their fate was dramatic, was instructive. They simply disappeared. Not one of them, no, not one, was sent to Parliament again by an Irish constituency. There, then, was the answer given to one of Mr. Gladstone's questions, the settlement of one of his doubts. The nationalists did, then, unquestionably, speak with the voice and in the name of the Irish people. The Irish people did deliberately demand Home Rule. Mr. Gladstone accepted the will of the Irish people; and he brought in his great measure to give to the Irish people the right of making laws for Ireland. His scheme was defeated by a combination of renegade Liberals with the Tory opposition; and he appealed to the country, and was defeated at the elections, and the Tories came into office. But let us examine a little into the nature of the defeat. In Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the great majority of the voters voted for Gladstone and Home Rule. It would be hardly too much to say that Ireland, Scotland, and Wales went solid for Gladstone and Home Rule. It was in England that Gladstone and Home Rule were

defeated. But let us see how they were defeated, even in England. I am strongly of opinion, that, although the majority of English votes was against Gladstone, the majority of English voters was with him, even in that election where England defeated him. This will perhaps seem paradoxical and unintelligible to an American reader, at first ; but I shall make it quite clear and reasonable. In England, if a man have the qualification in several constituencies, he can give a separate vote in each of these constituencies. We do not take our elections as America does, all on the same day. We spread our general elections over several weeks. If we give a man the right to record several votes, we give him, also, plenty of time to go up and down the country, and to drop his various ballot-papers into so many different ballot-boxes. We take care of our men of property in England ; for, of course, only property can confer this plurality of vote. A man has two or three country residences, each in a different electoral division ; he can vote in each of these electoral divisions. He has a town-house in London ; he can vote in that division of London also. Perhaps he is a banker or a lawyer, having offices or chambers in the City of London proper ; very good, then he has his vote

for the City of London election. A friend of my own, a staunch Conservative, told me that at the elections which overthrew Mr. Gladstone, he himself gave eight separate votes against Gladstone and Home Rule. My friend is not a territorial magnate; only a man of some position and means, who has a town-house and a country-house, a place of business in the city of London proper, a manufactory in a county town, and a residence near the manufactory, and two or three small places of residence, shooting-boxes and such like, in different parts of the country. These places altogether made him the possessor of eight votes; and, acting after his lights like a true Conservative, he gave (and small blame to him) his eight votes against Gladstone and Home Rule. But there are thousands of men in the country far richer than he, and with a wider range of qualifications entitling them to give separate votes. It will naturally be asked, Why did not Gladstone's followers do the same? Was not the law the same for them as for the others? Undoubtedly the law was the same for them as for the others; but observe who the Gladstonians were, and who the others. Who were the men who mainly supported Gladstone in England? Who were they who formed the rank and

file of his brave and true-hearted army? Why, who, of course, but the members of the English democratic party, the workers of all kinds, the artisans in the towns, the peasants on the fields in the counties? These were the men who followed Gladstone, and there was no plurality of votes for them. Show me the English artisan or English peasant who has a vote here and a vote there, and I will show you an English artisan who has a shooting-lodge in the Highlands, and an English peasant who has a town residence in Belgravia. No, the artisans and the peasants do not as a rule amass property, and acquire various qualifications; one man, one vote, is the law of life for them. Who were against Gladstone? Why, of course, in the main, the aristocrats and the plutocrats, the men of property and of many votes. Some time we shall set this right in England, and allow no man to have more than one vote. But so far it has not been set right, and it overthrew Mr. Gladstone at the last elections. I think my American readers will now understand the meaning of my assertion that, while in those elections the majority of English votes was against Mr. Gladstone, the majority of English voters was in his favor.

This, then, we have accomplished for Home Rule.

We have made it not merely the question of an Irish party, but the question of Ireland; and not the question of Ireland merely, but the question of all the liberalism of the two islands. Already Mr. Gladstone has done what no statesman ever succeeded in doing before,—he has reconciled the English and the Irish people. How many of us had through years and years longed and prayed for such a reconciliation, but hardly dared to hope for it, or, at least, to think that it could come to pass! And, now behold, it has come to pass, and by means of the Home Rule question. The whole democracy of the two islands are made into one party. When William O'Brien goes down from Dublin to take his trial in Cork County, he is welcomed at every station by crowds who cheer for "William O'Brien and the English people." The English members of Parliament, and democratic delegates, pour over to Ireland, and speak at great meetings of the national league. Labouchere; Jacob Bright, brother of John Bright; Brunner; Philip Stanhope, brother of Tory Earl Stanhope and of Edward Stanhope, war minister in the present Tory Government; Conybeare; Professor Stuart; Pickersgill,—these, and numbers of other conspicuous Radical members of Parliament, speak

up for Home Rule on Irish national platforms, as warmly and strongly as any Irishman could do. Wilfrid Blunt, who secured the defence of Arabi Pasha; Thorold Rogers, whose name is as well known in America as in England,—rouse up Irish audiences to a fervor which could be excelled by no Irish speaker. English ladies are there too, are present at evictions, and attend open-air meetings. English ladies were present at the Mitchells-town meeting, and could only by the earnest persuasions of Mr. Dillon and Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Brunner, be prevailed upon to go under shelter when the police began their wanton and outrageous fusillade. One of these ladies tells, with tears in her eyes, how a tall Tipperary man made his way up to the side of her carriage, and said, “English ladies, you have trusted yourselves to the protection of Tipperary boys, and there isn’t one of us here who won’t die before a hair of your heads is touched.” Among the English ladies who went to Ireland to testify to her sympathy with the Irish cause, was Miss Cobden, the daughter of John Bright’s old friend and companion-in-arms, Richard Cobden. I wonder what John Bright felt when he read the announcement, and if he realized all the full bearing of the fact upon his own altered position. Alas for

our old apostle of popular right, — alas for John Bright ! Alas, too, that a purely personal offence, or supposed offence, should have estranged him from the cause of Ireland ! Let us pass him over with the charity of silence. Among the English women who sympathize with the Irish national cause, none are more earnest than the Countess Russell, widow of the great Earl Russell, the Lord John Russell of the first Reform Bill, and her daughter Lady Agatha Russell.

The coming of Home Rule for Ireland is as certain as the rising of to-morrow's sun. The split in the Liberal party is not only a familiar accompaniment of a great reform movement, but it is the invariable and inevitable accompaniment of every such movement. There was a split in the Liberal party on the reform question in 1830 ; there was a split in the Liberal party in 1860, when Lord John Russell brought on his new Reform Bill, and the seceders joined the Tories, and for the time defeated the bill. When Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone brought in their Reform Bill in 1866, there was another split in the Liberal party, — the famous Cave of Adullam secession, — led by a far abler man than Mr. Chamberlain, — the present forgotten Lord Sherbrooke, — then the famous

Mr. Robert Lowe. Some of the peers and members of the House of Commons who were in that secession are in the present secession. What happened then? The secession delayed reform by just one year. But when the reform came, it came from Mr. Disraeli, and was of a much more advanced character than any thing that Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright had ventured to propose. And this brings us to another of the possibilities in the present crisis. We may get Home Rule from the Tories. The familiar movement of British political life is the education of the Tories up to that point when, seeing a certain reform inevitable, they come to the conclusion that, having got into office by opposing it, they had better keep in office by adopting it. Liberal statesmen start a Liberal policy. They teach it; they fight for it; they bring in measures to establish it; they know they have the country with them; but as yet they have not the House of Commons, and they are defeated, and they go out of office, and the Tories come in. Then, if the Tory leader be any thing of a statesman, he quickly finds out that the cause is growing and gaining in the country, that it is getting more and more to have the sympathy of the people, and that it must win before long. Thereupon

he is forced to a decision. If he be a very high-minded or scrupulous sort of man, he declares that he never can consent to adopt while in office a measure which he fought against when out of office, which he obtained office by opposing. So he resigns, and leaves any one who will to propitiate public opinion. The present Lord Salisbury has done this more than once already. But the idea of Mr. Disraeli was rather to accept the inevitable; not to trouble one's self overmuch about consistency; and, if the people wanted reform, to give them the reform they wanted. This was the policy of Tory statesmen before Mr. Disraeli's time. Catholic emancipation was first fiercely and furiously resisted by the Tories; it was at last carried into legislation by the Tories. We have seen what Mr. Disraeli did with reform in 1867. Having succeeded, with the help of the Liberal secessionists, in turning Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone out of office in 1866, he succeeded to their place; and he brought in, and carried, a much more expanded measure of reform in 1867. Now, the Tories may tire of their efforts to govern Ireland by a policy of coercion. They may find that they cannot do it. They may begin to shrink from the responsibility for too much shedding of

blood. They may begin to see that Home Rule is inevitable. Some of them may say, "That being so, we prefer to retire from office altogether." Others may say, "If it has to be done, why should we not stay in office and do it?" So there might be a re-organized Tory cabinet. Lord Randolph Churchill might come back to power. If he did, and if he saw any advantage in adopting the cause of Home Rule, he would not be deterred from doing so by the fact that he has lately been denouncing Home Rule. Why should he? He was not deterred from denouncing Home Rule by the fact that he had, but a short time before, been advocating Home Rule. I suppose this sort of thing seems strange and shocking to a foreign reader. I suppose our system of government by party does not bring with it unmixed blessing and credit. But there it is; and we have not, for the present, any thing to put in its place. And while men remain men, some of them will always be found ready to prefer office to dull, pedantic consistency, and to make up their mind that if anybody is to have the benefit of introducing a certain measure, they might as well have the benefit of doing so, even although they enjoyed the benefit of opposing and defeating it on a former occasion.

I need hardly say that the ardent hope of the whole Irish people, and of all English Radicals, is, that the great man who has risked and sacrificed so much in the cause of Home Rule, should be allowed by Providence to crown his noble career by carrying it to success. We shall have Home Rule. We want it from the hands of Mr. Gladstone, — “welcome from any, twofold blest from him.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROTESTANT MINORITY.

I HAVE often been asked, and in perfect good faith, by English friends who were not indisposed to turn with sympathy to the Irish cause, What security could you give for the rights of the Protestant minority under an Irish national Parliament? Well, I should say, to begin with, that the Irish Catholics are willing to give every statutable security for the protection of the Protestant minority that the wit of man can devise. We said this during the debates on Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule measure. "Give us a statutory Parliament, and put into the statute that creates the Parliament any security you will for the protection of the Protestant minority, and we shall accept it; for we wish the Protestants to be protected, as well as you do." But I say with the utmost sincerity, that I do not believe any statutory protection would really be needed. What security would there be under an

Irish national Parliament for the protection of the rights of the Protestant minority? What security for the rights of the men whose co-religionists have at all times, and in the darkest hours of our Irish national history, taken the most active and the most splendid part in the championship of the national cause? Why, I say that if the living were unable to protect the Irish Protestants, the dead in their graves would prove their ample shield and shelter. A Roman poet has pictured Hannibal as guarded at his table against the attempts of his enemies by the shadows of his great victories. The Irish Protestant is forever guarded in Ireland by the shadows of his great co-religionists who struggled and sacrificed and died for the national cause. The very names upon the gravestones—the one gravestone in Dublin City which is purposely left without a name—would be a protection better than any statute law. The names on the tombs of Wolfe Tone and Edward Fitzgerald and Thomas Addis Emmet and Hamilton Rowan and Smith O'Brien and Thomas Davis and John Mitchell and John Martin,—that tomb unmarked by a name which covers the remains of Robert Emmet,—these would alone be warrant for the safety of Protestants in Ireland. Time has added to these the

name of Isaac Butt ; will add to them the name of Charles Stewart Parnell. Many an Irish Catholic is generously jealous of the noble part which his Protestant fellow-countrymen have taken in the struggle for the Irish national cause. Does any rational man really think that the services of these patriots could ever be forgotten in Ireland? Does any one suppose that Irishmen are so unlike all other human beings, that they would make use of their legislative freedom to oppress the co-religionists of the very men who won that legislative independence for them? No ; until you can efface from the memory of Ireland all record of her past history, until you can sponge out of the Irish heart that feeling of gratitude which used to be thought its peculiar characteristic, there will never be needed any protection for the Irish Protestant other than that which is given by the gratitude and the sympathy and the love of his Irish Catholic fellow-subject and brother.

In truth, they curiously misunderstand the Irish cause who fancy it has any thing to do with the struggles of sect against sect. The clearest, the most striking, evidences can be given the other way. Since the Home Rule parliamentary party, under that name, has existed, it has had three

leaders. The Home Rule party has always been essentially democratic in its constitution, and it elects its leaders by the vote of a majority. The first leader chosen was Mr. Isaac Butt, an Episcopalian Protestant. When Mr. Butt died, we elected—I was then myself a member of the party—Mr. William Shaw, an Ulster Presbyterian, to succeed him. After it had become plain that Mr. Shaw was not advanced enough for the position, we elected in his place a Protestant Episcopalian, in the person of Mr. Parnell. Thus far the party, the great majority of which are Catholics, never had a Catholic leader. More than that, it never had a Catholic leader proposed for its acceptance. We elect our leader every year. At the opening of each session some one proposes that this one or that be elected chairman of the party; that is, leader. Anybody can propose any other name. No Catholic name ever was proposed or suggested. I think this is tolerably clear evidence that there is not much sectarian feeling in the party or in the country. Of course it would be said that of late years Mr. Parnell's qualifications are so surpassing, that no fervor of Catholic bigotry could think of dispossessing him. Quite true; but there was a time when the party were not so certain, when the

world was not so certain, of Mr. Parnell's qualifications; when he was new and untried; when some thought his parliamentary policy all a mistake. There was the occasion, for example, when he was pitted against Mr. Shaw. He was elected only by a small majority over Mr. Shaw. I spoke on that occasion myself, and I said that I personally would rather not make any change at such a time; that if Mr. Shaw had not been quite a satisfactory leader up to that moment, it was perhaps because he had not entirely understood the feelings and desires of the majority of the Irish people, and that I personally would have been for giving him another chance. Since, however, Mr. Parnell had been proposed as leader of the party, — I was standing as I spoke just between Mr. Shaw and Mr. Parnell, — I could not have the slightest doubt as to the vote I was to give: I should unhesitatingly vote for Mr. Parnell as the man best qualified to lead the Irish party, and in whom the Irish people had the fullest confidence. I mention all this now, only to illustrate the fact that the Catholic members of the party — and they were many — who chafed at Mr. Shaw's leadership, never thought of looking about for a Catholic to lead them. On the other hand, there were some, not a few, Catholics then in the party

who thought Mr. Parnell far too extreme a man to make a safe leader; but none of them put forward a Catholic name. In fact, the question of Catholic and Protestant was never raised, was never talked of, was, I firmly believe, never thought of, in connection with the choice of a leader for the Irish parliamentary party. Yet, if there were any feelings of distrust on the one side or on the other, then it would seem was surely a time when such feelings must find some sort of expression. Those who talk about the rival bigotries of Catholic and Protestant in Ireland are talking of a long-buried past, or they are talking of what they do not understand. There are the Orangemen, of course, and many of them are bigoted and savage enough in all conscience; and of course, as is inevitable, by showing themselves bigoted and savage, they drive some of their opponents into acts of retaliation. But no one who knows Ireland, really believes that the Orangemen represent the intelligence and the respectability, the good feeling and the patriotism, of the Protestants of Ireland. The Orangemen of Ireland are a very small number of men when compared with the population of the country; I should as soon think of describing the old Ku-Klux organization as representative of the people of America,

North and South, as I should think of regarding the bigotry of Irish Orangemen as any indication of the general feeling of Irish Protestants. Then we must make allowance even for the Orangemen. The ascendancy of sect for which they have been struggling so long and so fiercely is gone forever, and they know it. All their political hopes have left, or, at all events, are leaving them. A nationalist sits for one of the divisions of Belfast itself. A nationalist sits for Derry City. Of the representatives of the province of Ulster, a majority are nationalists. Nationalism has a majority of the population, as it has a majority of the representation, of Ulster. Take my own case. I sit for Derry City, long believed to be the very stronghold and fastness of Orange ascendancy. In Derry City the Catholics are far indeed from having a majority of the votes. If it were a question of Catholic against Protestant, I should not have had the smallest chance in Derry, should never have thought of contesting the seat. I sit for Derry by virtue of the support which patriotic Protestants have given me.

Let us look at this matter from another point of view. Let us come to the provinces and counties which we call Catholic distinctively; the constitu-

encies where five voters out of six are Catholic, where no man could possibly have the faintest hope of success, except through the favor of the Catholic voters. What has happened in many of these constituencies? Protestant Episcopalians and Presbyterians from Ulster have been invited to stand for these Catholic constituencies, and now represent them in the House of Commons. Who ever said during all that time, "We won't have a Protestant; we must have representatives of our own faith"? The Catholic who ventured to whisper any thing of the kind would have found little welcome from his neighbors of his own faith. It was very significant, and very touching as well, when, during the debate on Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, man after man arose from among the Parnellite ranks, and began his speech in some such words as these: "Mr. Speaker, I rise as an Ulster Protestant to advocate this measure of Home Rule for Ireland." Nothing is more extraordinary, is more misleading, is more absurd, than the manner in which some writers and speakers treat of what they are pleased to call "Protestant Ulster." They have created for themselves an entirely imaginary Ulster, an Ulster composed of anti-national Protestants only, an Ulster living within a pale of anti-national

sentiment, an Ulster which, in the event of any Home Rule scheme being introduced and likely to pass, would pray to be legislatively annexed to Scotland rather than endure companionship with the Irish of Leinster and Munster and Connaught. The real Ulster is an Ulster in which the Catholic and Protestant populations are very nearly equal in numbers, and are for the most part mixed up inextricably. There are, of course, places, like certain divisions of the city of Belfast, which may be called altogether Protestant ; and there is also the county of Donegal, which may be called altogether Catholic. If we have regard to politics only, we shall find that of the Ulster counties, a fourth part of Down, a third part of Armagh, half of Tyrone, the whole of Donegal, the whole of Cavan, and the whole of Monaghan, are represented by nationalists. Mr. Chamberlain has some delightful plan for exempting Ulster from the rule of a national Parliament. How will he do it ? All the frontier counties, if I may call them so, the counties which draw near and nearer to Leinster and Connaught, are nationalist. I suppose he would hardly say to the inhabitants of these counties, "We don't care what you think or what you want ; we say you shall not be joined with the rest of Ireland." But then it is not these fron-

tier counties alone that are nationalist. Far away to the north there is Donegal, entirely Catholic and entirely nationalist. Londonderry and Antrim are, in fact, the only counties where any case could possibly be made out for separate legislation. Well, but we had South Londonderry in the last Parliament, and only lost it this time by a small majority obtained against us by the temporary junction of the secessionist Liberals with the Tories. Is there nothing to be said for the national sentiments of the minority, who are, after all, only a minority in name and in the parliamentary sense, of the people of South Londonderry? And then, what about the majority of the population of Derry City, the capital of the county, who have declared for nationalism, and elected a follower of Mr. Parnell to be their representative? What is ingenious Mr. Chamberlain going to do with them? What about the population of the western division of the city of Belfast, the capital city of Antrim, who have emphatically declared for nationalism, and elected my friend Mr. Sexton to represent them in Parliament? What about the simple fact that the majority of the people of Ulster are in favor of an Irish national Parliament? I have no hesitation in saying, that if the question be left to Ulster, and to Ulster alone,

if the *plébiscite* of all the men of Ulster be taken, and Leinster, Munster, and Connaught stand out and are silent, the voice of the majority of Ulster men will proclaim Home Rule for Ireland. Look at the absurdity in which the arguments of men like Mr. Chamberlain involve them. So profound is their distrust of Irish Catholics, so rooted their conviction that, if these Catholics got a chance, they would delight in the oppression of their Protestant fellow-countrymen, including Mr. Parnell, of course, —so strong is their conviction of this kind, that they would not consent to leave the Protestants of Ulster at the mercy of an Irish national Parliament. Yet the Protestants of Ulster are many and strong; they have wealth; they have energy. We are always hearing from their English admirers how far superior they are to the population of the other provinces; they have the whole Conservative and Liberal secessionist party to watch over them, to champion their interests, to secure them against wrong. But these same Liberal secessionist gentlemen are perfectly willing to abandon the Protestants of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught; the Protestants who in many places are not in the proportion of one to six among the population. They are perfectly willing to leave these Protest-

ants, few, scattered, cut off from Ulster,—they are perfectly willing to commit them to the mercies of an Irish national Parliament. Good gentlemen of the Liberal secession party, you know very well you don't mean what you are saying. You are not half so bad as you give yourselves out to be. I do not like Mr. Chamberlain now as well as I did once, but I do not believe he is a monster of injustice and inhumanity. And yet what but a monster of injustice and inhumanity would he be, if he were really willing to abandon the Protestants of the South and West, few and defenceless as they are, to a tyranny which he says would be unendurable to the strong and numerous Protestants of the North? Of course he would not do any thing of the kind. He knows perfectly well that the Protestants of the South would be as safe under an Irish Parliament, as the Catholics of the South. He knows very well that the Protestants of the North would be equally safe, but it would not suit him to admit that now. So he sets up an entirely imaginary Ulster, and he tries to fan again, into a flame, the dying fires of religious bigotry and sectarian antipathy in England and in Ireland too. He is a clever man, and he is not weighed down with any heavy load of scruples in political matters. Also,

he is, for an eminent public man, singularly ignorant of the history of any thing except that of modern Birmingham ; and absolute ignorance makes a man very bold with his experiments sometimes. But he will never get Ireland to accept his imaginary Ulster ; Ulster herself will tell him so if he really wants to hear the truth of the story.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAKING OF THE NATION.

MEANTIME I am glad and proud to say that the nation is making itself. Ireland is practising the great art of self-government. She is training herself in every way. It is not too much to say that at no other period of Ireland's history did Irishmen at home and abroad ever fall into such well-ordered lines of discipline. The disunion among themselves, the internecine quarrels, which destroyed so many hopeful efforts in former times, are unknown in this movement. Many hard things are said every day about the Irish parliamentary party by its enemies; but no one has ever said of it that it is not a well-disciplined party. No one who looks at the *personnel* of that party can possibly doubt that there must be many differences of opinion among the men who compose it. All sorts and conditions of men are in that party. There are landlords in it, not a few; and there are the sons of peasants. There are

soldiers who have won distinction in the service of the Queen ; soldiers who won distinction in the French, the Austrian, the American army ; there are men who belonged to the ranks of the Fenian insurrection. There are Irish-Americans ; there is at least one pure-blooded Englishman. There are some rich bankers ; there are clever and successful lawyers ; there are one or two working artisans ; there are sharp, shrewd men of business ; there are journalists and novelists and poets and learned professors. It would be impossible to believe that a party thus made up could always find itself in spontaneous agreement of opinion. Yet the party always meets the House of Commons as a united party ; as one man. The explanation of this is that the Irish party debate every question in their private meetings, and "bolt it to the bran," the youngest and rawest recruit having as good a right to be heard, and obtaining as ready a hearing, as the most distinguished of the veterans ; and the discussion is sometimes keen and warm enough. And when all who desire to speak have spoken, the leader of the party then gives his opinion, or else he declares, as he has often done, that it is a subject on which he prefers the guidance of the party without expressing any opinion of his own ; and then a division is taken, and the

party is bound by the fundamental principle of its constitution to abide by the vote of its majority. So the nationalist Irish members come out from their committee-room, and pass into the House of Commons; and when the division is taken, they vote as one man. Keen is the curiosity, the anxiety, the eagerness, felt all through the House of Commons, on the eve of some great division, about the vote of the Irish party. Sometimes there are reasons which make it proper and necessary to keep our decision a secret to the last moment; and when this is resolved on, the secret is faithfully kept. All this is training for self-government: all this is self-government. Then take the institutions of Ireland herself. The only really representative bodies we have are the corporations and town councils of the large cities. What has happened in these assemblies? Although the municipal franchise is even still a very narrow and restricted one in most of our communities, yet the national party have taken possession of nearly all those corporate bodies. Wherever there is any reality in the representative system, there the electors send nationalists to represent them. No one can deny that the cause of municipal government has benefited immensely by the change from the condition of things when only

Tories and old-fashioned "Whigs," as they are called in Ireland, had possession of our corporate bodies. The same healthy breath of national public opinion which purified the representation has purified also the atmosphere of municipal life. Town councils which were hotbeds of jobbery and something like corruption then, are above suspicion now. It is to the honor of the present municipal legislators, who are, of course, Catholics in the great majority, that, although they have succeeded to men who always, when they could, would contrive to shut out Catholics from every sort of public employment, they have never, in the smallest instance or in the largest, where public employment was concerned, made the slightest difference between the services of Protestants and the services of Catholics. No one who knows the places — no one who saw such cities a few years ago, and has seen them lately — will deny that the nationalist town councils have shown a capacity and an energy for public work which certainly was not known to, or, at all events, was not exhibited by, their predecessors. Great public improvements have been made, public funds have been managed economically, sanitary arrangements have been introduced, which would do credit to the greatest of English

cities. The bitterest anti-nationalist would not think of making such charges against the corporation of the city of Dublin as those which were lately made, and which formed the subject of public scandal and public investigation, against the corporation of the city of London. Our boards of guardians are not representative. At least, they only admit the principle of representation half way—not quite half way. The majority of the members of these boards are nominated by the Crown; a certain number are elected by the people, but on a somewhat narrow franchise. Where the representative principle prevails, the nationalist candidates are always, or almost always, elected. Our grand juries are an institution which I trust is unknown to any other civilized people. As Sydney Smith humorously said, when speaking of the Irish State Church in the old days, “Nothing that we know of the internal condition of Timbuctoo would warrant us in supposing that the people of that country would put up with such an anomaly.” An Irish grand jury is not only a tribunal of first instance in criminal law, but it is also the financial body intrusted with the raising and the spending of money for road-making, bridge-making, and all other such county works; and it is a body nominated

by the county sheriff, who is himself nominated by the Castle. It is hardly necessary to say that the Irish national party do not command a majority in the grand juries. Indeed, this fact in itself may be said to tell the whole story. Where the people elect, the national party always have the majority. Where the Castle appoints, good care is taken that only men are employed whom the people would never elect. We had a curious instance lately, in Dublin, of the manner in which even old castle strongholds have to yield sometimes to the change in the condition of things. Dublin City has a right to appoint her sheriff in this way: The corporation submits to the lord-lieutenant the names of three men, and the lord-lieutenant selects one of the three. This plan worked most satisfactorily for the Castle and the British garrison party, so long as the city council was altogether in the hands of the Tories and the Whigs. The sort of men from whom the Castle would always be glad to choose were invariably submitted to the choice of the Castle. But now, behold, the condition of things is entirely changed. The Dublin town council has only a very few members who are not stanch Home Rulers; and last year the council astonished the Castle by presenting as the three names from which

the selection for the sheriff's office was to be made, the names of Mr. Sexton, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Healy. What was to be done? Mr. Dillon was actually then under prosecution by the Castle; Mr. Healy and Mr. Sexton were the avowed and uncompromising enemies of the whole Castle-system. All three men had been in prison on some political charge or other, or else under Mr. Forster's Suspicion Act, when a man could be imprisoned against whom no charge was made, or was even intended to be made. What was to be done? The lord lieutenant had to choose, the Act of Parliament said so; the Act which was made at a time when there was as little thought of a nationalist town council in Dublin as of popular government in Siberia. The lord lieutenant saw no better way out of the difficulty than by appointing Mr. Sexton, over whose head, at all events, no castle prosecution was hanging just at that moment. Not many cities, I think, have a great orator for their high sheriff.

Every one remembers how, in the immortal "Monte Cristo" of the elder Dumas, the prisoner of the Château d'If tries through all the horror and the darkness and the wasting weariness of his cell, to keep up his physical strength by physical exercise. He has set his heart on escape. He believes,

with a kind of passionate faith, that sooner or later he is to be free; and he is determined that the moment which finds him free shall find him also a strong and a capable man, ready to defend his friends and to punish his enemies. I have sometimes thought that what is told of Edmond Dantes might be told in a manner of Ireland. During the long term of her imprisonment the mind of the country was set on enfranchisement, and was determined to be able to make fitting use of legislative independence when, in the mercy of Providence, the hour for legislative independence should come. So, through all these years, the Irish people have been training themselves for the work of self-government in order that there may be no delay; that they may be ready when the time comes. Thus we see, under our very eyes, the forming of a nation going on. When the day comes, and it is but a short way off now, on which the imperial Parliament shall say to Ireland, "We emancipate you from subjection; we give you your own Parliament: go and form yourselves into a nation," Ireland, speaking with pride for her people, can say, "Behold, we are a nation trained and taught — self-trained, self-taught — for all the responsibilities and all the work of a nation."

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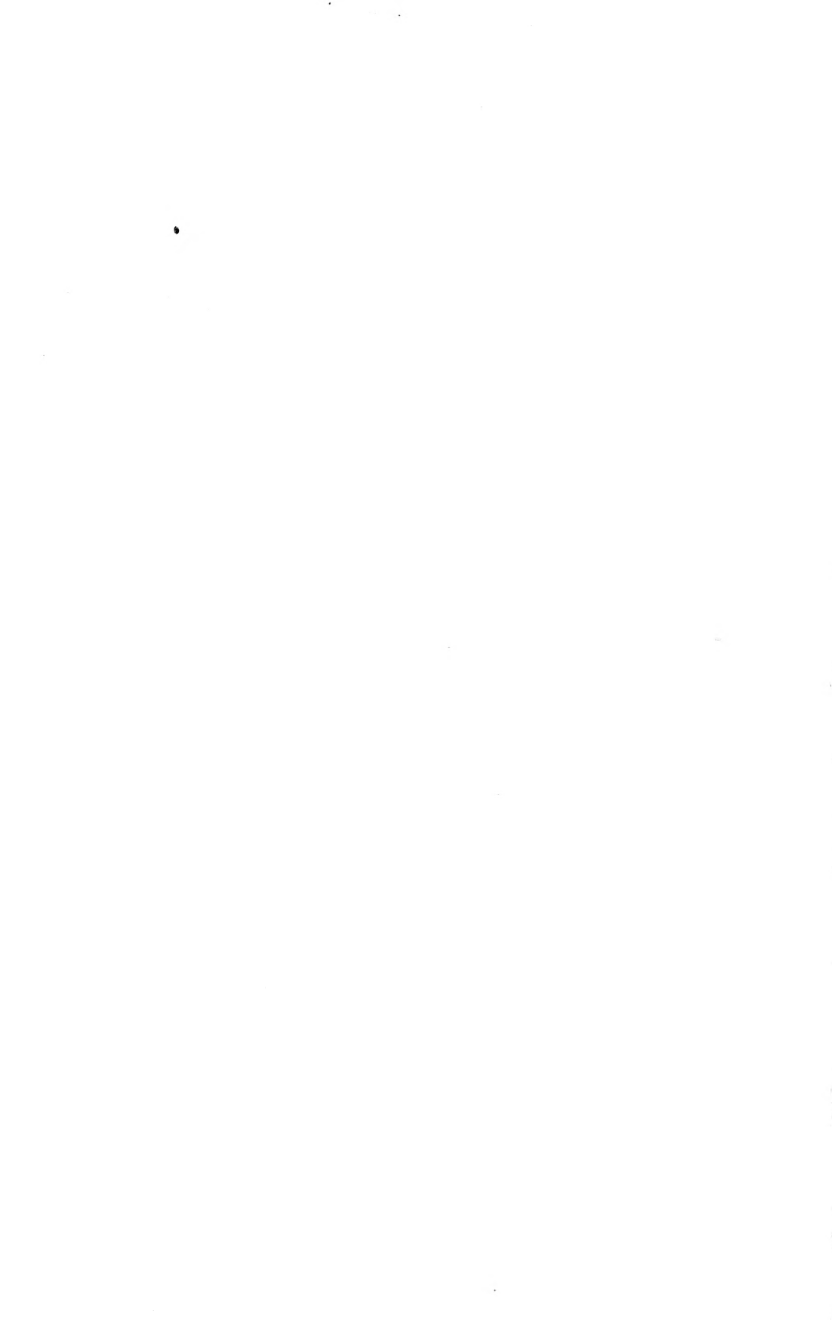
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